First-hand information

What is life like in the GDR?

Living standards and way of life under socialism

1977 edition

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The way of life and standard of living under socialism

PANORAMA DDR

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The German Democratic Republic has existed now for almost 30 years in the heart of Europe. It is a socialist state in which workers, cooperative farmers, intellectuals and professional people, along with all other sections of the population, share political and economic power.

Allied with the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community, we have embarked upon the road to a new society, a road that is as correct as it is complicated. In a joint effort, we continue to forge further ahead with each day that passes.

In the coming weeks and months, we shall be looking forward to 7 October 1977, the 30th anniversary of the GDR's foundation, a jubilee which we shall commemorate knowing that we live in a state to which we feel fully committed, because it is a state of peace, free from exploitation and oppression. In November 1977, the SED Central Committee, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of the GDR, as well as the National Council of the National Front issued an appeal which reads in part: The German Democratic Republic is the logical result of the entire progressive movement in German history. It is a true home and fatherland for all its citizens.

What has this new society, what has socialism

brought people in the GDR? How do working men and women live in the GDR? What are their living standards like?

Questions like this are frequently asked. It is not wages and prices alone that count, however important they may be. To live is more than having food and drink, clothing and housing. A decent life means much more. It also raises questions like:

What educational opportunities are there for myself and my children? What influence do I have on developments in the country? How secure is my job? Is there an equitable distribution of wealth? Am I just a statistic at my place of work or do I have a say? What share do I have in the country's cultural life? What does the future hold for me and my family? So many questions. We will try and answer them.

I.

How much do people matter?

It is reassuring for working people in the socialist community to know that the foreign and domestic policies pursued by their countries are oriented towards their well-being and the happiness of the entire population. Everybody has the right to share in social development and improve his own life, and opportunities for this abound. This also holds true for the German Democratic Republic.

For a life in peace and security

Peace and security are everyday concepts, both of which are important for everybody in at least two respects. Contentment and internal peace will hardly be possible with the danger of a new, devastating war hanging over us like the sword of Damocles and with relations between nations being anything but good-neighbourly in character.

Peace must be secure. This is the first priority. If, in addition, people's incomes are secure, if health protection is ensured and if the future of the up-and-coming generation is cared for as well as the senior citizens' autumn of life, then this provides the essential conditions for a happy life, to which all human beings are entitled. For this reason, the GDR government's policies lay great emphasis on ensuring security. We stand for understanding between peoples, because we are internationalists. We do not wish to annex others' territory, we consider the European frontiers final and in our

country war propaganda and incitement to national hatred are severely punished. We have completely and for all time broken with the reactionary, fascist past.

All of this is a firm foundation for our foreign policy, which is aimed at continuing the process of détente and, thereby, creating the best possible external conditions for our work of peaceful socialist construction.

How are freedom and human rights guaranteed?

For people in the GDR, socialism means a society which is free from exploitation and ordered in a planned manner to the best of our knowledge and judgement. We are making reality of the idea formulated by Karl Marx that social relations and living conditions must be arranged humanely so that all people can live and act humanely. We have overcome misery and hunger, injustice and ignorance, crises and inflation.

This could only be achieved through an efficient socialist economic system based on public ownership of the means of production. This is why, shortly after the defeat of fascism, armament profiteers and trusts in what is today the GDR were expropriated as a result of a plebiscite and new laws and their firms placed in the hands of the people. This measure finally opened the way for making the interests and wishes of the millions the decisive element in government politics. Overall national planning of all sectors by the state was made possible, taking into account social requirements and objective laws of development. The people could, for the first time, grant themselves real measures of freedom—a freedom that can really be practised in everyday life and the economic and political foundations of which are not only proclaimed in the Constitution but have their roots in the new social order.

The right to work

Human beings are distinguished from all other living creatures by their capacity to work and to employ their intellect and strength purposefully to create objects with a higher social value. We earn our subsistence through work. Work brings out our talents, moulds our character and gives us our place within society.

The GDR proceeds from the assumption that the right to an adequate job is the most elementary human right, as it enables human beings to live a decent life and prevents them from being excluded from social life and becoming superfluous and demoralized because of unemployment. We consider it shows the superiority of socialism that our planned economy has done away with social anarchy and the apparent over-production accompanying the underdeveloped consumption capacity of the population, which are the causes of crises. During all the years since the GDR's foundation in 1949, there has never been unemployment in this country and all its citizens are certain there will be none in the future either. No one need fear being laid off or arbitrarily dismissed by an employer.

The level of economic security reached is a prime criterion for judging the quality of life and our standard of living. What is written in article 24 of the Constitution is not just true on paper—that every citizen in the GDR "shall have the right to a job and its free selection in accordance with social requirements and personal qualifications".

The new Labour Code drawn up in 1977 under the auspices of the trade unions contains major supplementary provisions. It further develops this fundamental civil right, so that every single person is entitled to uninterrupted employment. Working people may terminate their employment contract at any time, after giving 14 days notice, and they are not required to give reasons for so doing. Enterprises, however, may give notice to an employee only with the prior approval of the trade union branch committee and only then for the reasons exactly defined by the law. In addition, before giving notice, enterprises are required to find acceptable employment for the persons concerned on their own premises or elsewhere. The notorious letters giving notice of dismissal are unknown in the GDR.

Education for all

Socialism is in a position consciously to solve human beings' problems, and to guide social development to benefit all. It is in line with the ideas of the working class, the leading force in the GDR, that all sections and groups of the population should increasingly share in this development. This not only calls for good will but, first and foremost, for deep knowledge and understanding of essential political and economic issues and the way they inter-relate. We can only live up to the requirements of the scientific and technological revolution, if our up-and-coming generation is equipped with knowledge of the natural sciences and technical skills and if all citizens are, throughout their lives, given opportunities to improve their qualifications to meet new demands.

As in all socialist countries—and for 60 years in the Soviet Union—the educational privileges of the well-to-do have once and for all been eliminated in the GDR. What decides the type and scope of a person's schooling, choice of career and studies is not his father's purse but simply his own ability, knowledge and skill. Under the Constitution, any young person has the right and opportunity to attain high educational standards.

Over 92 per cent of all young people in the GDR complete compulsory ten-year comprehensive polytechnical schooling and 99 per cent undergo full vocational training. There are 172 students per 10,000 population. 58 per cent of students are sons and daughters of workers and cooperative farmers.

Hundreds of thousands of industrial workers and office employees improve their education through extra-mural study courses, in industrial education facilities or special classes for women, thus not only raising their level of qualifications but also increasing their incomes. There are no dead ends in our educational system. Nobody is doomed to end up as an unskilled worker.

Thus each and every citizen—whether old or young, male or female, healthy or incapacitated—is offered appropriate

educational opportunities. The privileges of former times have been eliminated, which, of course, does not mean that diligence and intelligence are neglected.

Feeling secure in the community

People from capitalist countries visiting the GDR often say that what strikes them in particular is people's community feeling and fellowship. And indeed the emergence of new human relations, an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, are among the finest and most important features of socialist society.

One distinctive feature of life in a socialist society is people's growing feeling of security. This feeling is the result of full employment and gradually rising real incomes, thorough vocational training for all and an autumn of life without material want, of equal educational opportunities and a high level of education as well as a comprehensive health system. As a consequence, people are not indifferent to each other's problems. No one is left to fend for himself and there are no outcasts.

The spirit of solidarity inherent in the working class and the new patterns of behaviour which are developed in the work-process in what are known here as socialist brigades, have a growing effect in determining and changing the thoughts and actions of all working people. Needless to say, this development does not take place overnight, nor is it devoid of conflicts and contradictions. Deeply engrained habits of thinking are tenacious. Negative outside influences are not inconsiderable either. But mutual aid and fellowship already predominate.

This process is not automatic. It is systematically encouraged by the schools, theatre, radio, film and television. The cooperation of all parties and organizations of the GDR in the National Front plays a big role here. It is a vast socialist people's movement, which is also assisted by hundreds of thousands of non-affiliated people. The National Front com-

mittees and the tenants' associations are instrumental in developing new human relations between families in residential areas and building up an intellectual and cultural life which has something to offer to all.

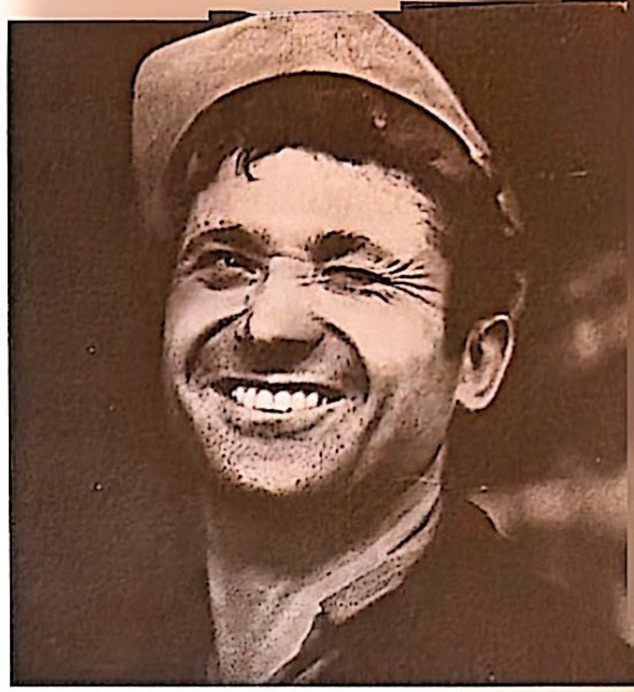
In short: in the GDR people are not judged by their power or fortune but by their human qualities. As inevitable as capitalism turns the people against each other and condemns them to loneliness, socialism brings people closer together.

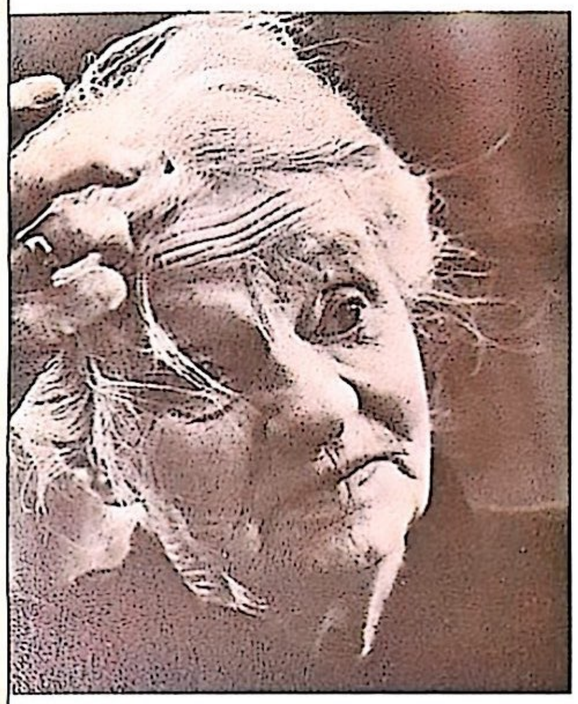
Material considerations are not the only ones

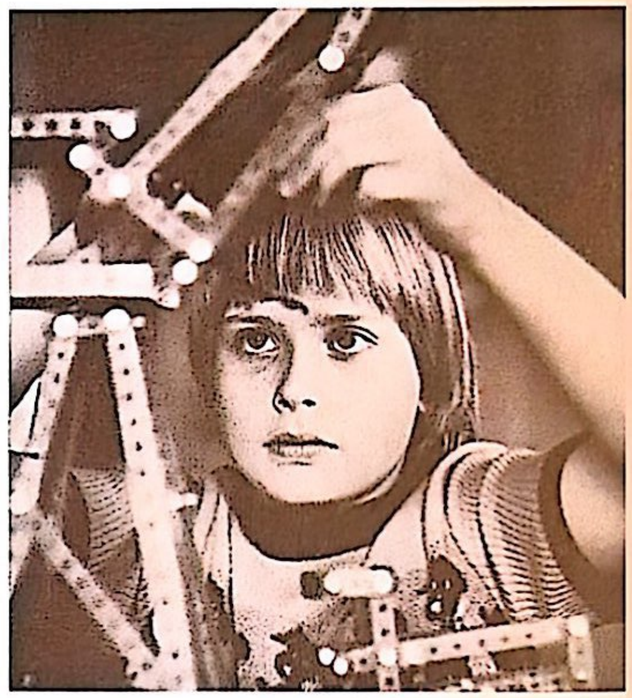
For GDR citizens, the meaning and content of life is not just determined by money and economic statistics. Material considerations are not the only ones, although the ever better satisfaction of the population's growing needs forms the basis for general contentment, joie de vivre, happiness and creativeness. We therefore speak about living and cultural standards, the raising of which we consider to be the primary task of our overall economic and social welfare policies. So we are concerned with human beings as whole people, whose aptitudes, talents and individual worth must be fully realized.

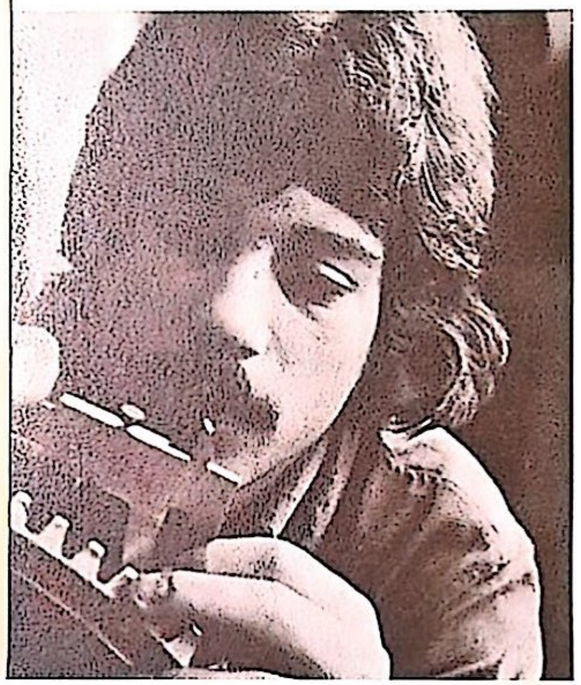
Consequently, the term "living standards" also includes the real opportunities working people have to take part in intellectual and cultural life, the extent of their creative activities and their participation in running public affairs, the standard of the education and the health system and the possibilities open to them for going in for sport and spending their leisure-time meaningfully.

Hence it is by no means unusual that—as an investigation in Halle and Leipzig county showed—54 per cent of working-class households there own more than 100 books each, that the number of people who went to art museums rose by 50 per cent over the past ten years and that work teams from socialist enterprises and agricultural production cooperatives were among those visiting these institutions regularly.









People in the GDR are linked by close bonds to their party and state leadership. Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the GDR's Council of State, and other public figures visiting the county town of Schwerin (below).

Frau Dr. Vater (centre), member of the People's Chamber, wants to see for herself how the Rauch family with their eight children like the new six-room dwelling (top left).

Alexanderplatz in Berlin, capital of the GDR (bottom left).

The Palace of the Republic on Berlin's Marx-Engels-Platz attracts young and old alike. Sixteen paintings prompting beholders to think were created by artists from our republic for the Foyer Gallery. Our photo shows the paintings by Bernhard Heisig (left) and Ronald Paris (right).

The society we live in

This brings us to the decisive element in determining the character and the quality of people's life: the social system, the society you live in.

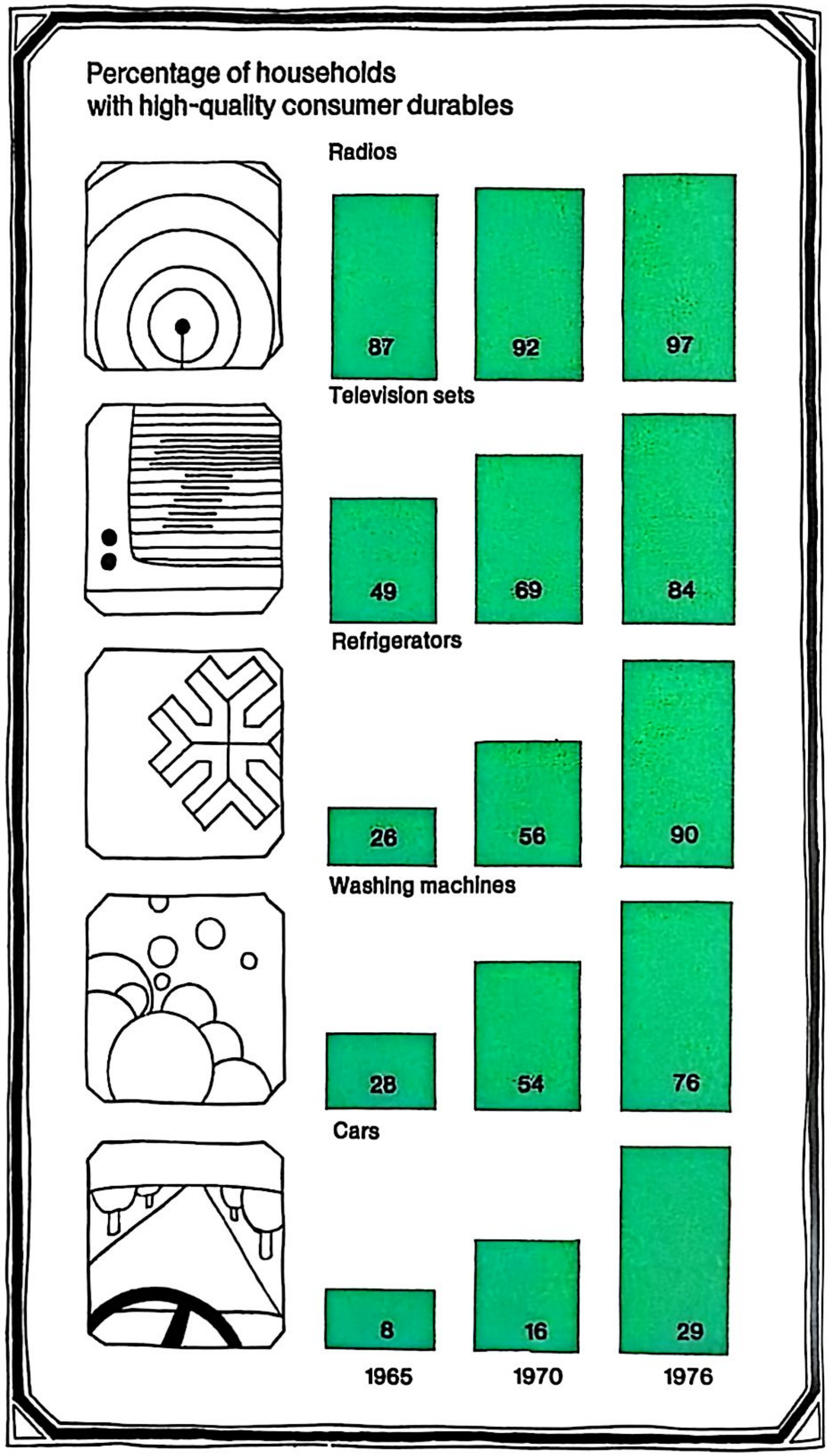
Who calls the tune in the state? Who benefits from the people's labour? How much do people count for, how are they judged? What kind of policy is pursued by the government? Who does the country side with? All these are questions substantially determining the way you live, whether you can live life to the full as a satisfied and happy human being, or whether you are worried, unfulfilled, without any real aim in life.

The GDR is a socialist state. It is an integral part of the great community of socialist countries, that new world of socialism whose mainstay is the Soviet Union, in which the exploitation of man by man was ended for the first time in human history.

Our new life began on 8 May 1945 when the armies of the socialist Soviet Union brought Nazi imperialism to its knees through colossal sacrifices and unparalleled heroism. This provided people in what was then the Soviet occupied zone with the chance to take a completely new path. And we seized this chance, assisted by our Soviet friends and led by the SED, the united party of the working class.

In the GDR, which was founded on 7 October 1949, there are no capitalist corporations or private banks. The working class rules supreme. Everything serves the welfare of the individual and society as a whole, helping the socialist community to thrive and strengthening international solidarity between all working people.

It cannot be over-stressed, therefore, that social relations are decisive for determining the real quality of life. The entirety of man's living conditions depend on these social relations. The society you live in answers the question of **how** you live.



II.

What is meant by the standard of living?

"Money is not everything but it eases your mind", says a German proverb. Of course, one's standard of living depends on wages, prices, rents and one's savings. But to judge the standard of living of every citizen, one has to take many other factors into consideration.

Economic security for all

To do everything to further the well-being of the people, in the interests of the working class and all other working people, is considered by the SED, the leading party in the GDR, as the essence of socialism and, consequently, as the main priority in its overall work. This is why the 8th SED Congress in 1971 defined the chief task of domestic policy as being to raise the standard of living and cultural level of the people through growing national economic efficiency—a course which was endorsed by the party's 9th Congress in 1976. Of course, even before these two congresses, our socialist government was concerned to make progress in this direction. But by the beginning of the 1970s, progress could be made on a more massive scale and could be planned ahead further. So, since then, the largest ever social welfare programme in the history of the GDR has been put into action. It was drawn up jointly by the SED, the GDR government and the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions.

An estimated 50,000 million marks will be allocated to this in the period up to 1980, in order further to raise the workers' share in the national wealth and to reduce the social differences that still exist.

House-building is central to our social welfare programme. The aim is to solve the housing problem by 1990. In the period up to 1980 alone, another 55,000 million marks will be made available from the national budget for the construction, expansion and modernization of at least 750,000 dwellings.

Reviewing the years since 1971, it can fairly be said that the social welfare programme has been realized point after point, according to plan. Basic minimum wages were put up twice and there have been increases in wages and salaries for workers in many professions. Apprentice pay was raised twice and minimum holiday leave extended from 15 to 18 working days. Maternity leave before and after childbirth has been prolonged twice, now being 26 weeks. Pensions were likewise raised twice to pay tribute to the performance while at work of retired people. Sickness benefits were improved. Young married couples are assisted with interest-free loans. Working hours for shift-workers and working mothers with two or more children were cut down. People employed in the education system and in the health services also benefited.

When we say that socialism serves the well-being of the entire people this is not just a declaration of intent or a superficial promise. Word and deed are one here, because all our working people determine how far our social welfare policies are implemented through their performance at work. And as everybody sees months after that good work brings rewards, economic security and higher living standards give rise to a growing economic potential.

Economic and social welfare policies form a unity

Socialist society is free from exploitation, because the means of production are the property of the people. This is how the GDR has abolished the disastrous contradiction between the

drive for profits and the people's interests. For us the economy is a means to an end—that end being to continually raise the population's living standards and cultural level. This is what we understand by the unity of economic and social welfare policies. Growing economic strength leads directly to greater social benefits. We can only share out as much as we produce, so the more wealth is created in the economy, the more each individual can benefit by it.

By the early 1970s, the GDR was able to carry out such a plan to the full, because we had created an up-to-date material and technological basis for meeting the needs of socialism. The volume of industrial output will, for instance, exceed 321,000 million marks in 1980. This is a 34-per-cent-increase over the 1975 figure. The national income (net social product) is showing a similar trend: it will grow from the 1970 figure of 109,000 million marks to a total of 182,000 million marks in 1980. This makes the GDR one of the ten strongest industrial countries in the world.

How much do people earn?

Real incomes have increased in step with economic growth, i.e., by an annual average of over four per cent. Expressed in figures, it means that average incomes among industrial workers and office employees came to roughly 755 marks a month in 1970, 927 marks in 1976 and will have risen to some 1,085 marks at the end of the current Five-Year Plan in 1980. You earn good money in return for good work in the GDR. This is a tremendous source of strength for our economy which is going all out growth. Here are some tables to illustrate this:

Index of consumer prices, prices charged for services and tariffs for working class and office employees' households (1970 = 100)

1955	1960	1965	1970	1976
116.0	101.6	101.9	100	96.6

Index of average monthly incomes (1970 = 100)

1955	1960	1965	1970	1976
57	74	84	100	122

Three things should be borne in mind when considering these figures:

Firstly: that wages rose, and continue to rise, at a steady rate without any need for social conflicts or strikes. The working class party and the workers' and farmers' government take the necessary steps in complete agreement with the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions, as a direct response to the growing strength of the economy.

Secondly: while incomes have steadily risen, not only have prices remained stable, but workers' compulsory contributions to the pension and national insurance scheme have also stayed at the same level. This is to say that any rise in gross wages is offset neither by soaring prices nor by increases in taxes and contributions. It leads, on the contrary, to rises in net wages and real purchasing power. Hence, under socialism, an increase in net income means a direct increase in real income.

Thirdly: The average wages mentioned are those of workers and office employees. Unlike the capitalist countries, we do not have any top managers and executives earning 20, 50 or 70 times as much as ordinary workers. 'Average' figures are forced upwards this way in capitalist statistics—but not in the GDR.

It should also be mentioned that a family's standard of living is not only determined by the father's paypacket. What matters is the whole family income. In the GDR, 86 per cent of all women of working age go out to work, which is chiefly due to full equality and to our exemplary social services.

The monthly net household income of an average industrial worker's or office employee's family of four went up as follows (in marks):

1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
1,265	1,302	1,373	1,440	1,543	1,556

In 1970, the proportion of households with a net monthly income of over 1,600 marks accounted for 7.3 per cent and for 26.3 per cent in 1976. Another 35.3 per cent of households earned net incomes of between 1,200 and 1,600 marks in 1976.

Equal pay for equal work

"Equal pay for equal work!" was a traditional demand raised by the German working-class movement. It was fought for in vain for a century. But in 1949, immediately after the defeat of fascism, it was raised to the status of law in what is today the GDR. Since then, women and young people have invariably received equal pay for equal work in all branches of industry, in administrative bodies and in schools. This principle was already enshrined in the first Constitution of the GDR promulgated in 1949 and is a matter of course for us all today. In this way, the basis for any discrimination against women and young people was eliminated.

The past and present of the GDR have furnished convincing proof that women are just as clever and intelligent, talented and courageous as men are. They receive equal pay, because they show the same performance. 50 per cent of the GDR's work-force are women. Many of them make a greater contribution to the joint family income than their men.

We do not advocate egalitarianism. Biological differences, the female constitution and the limitations of young people's experience are taken into due account. Equality of all without discrimination is considered an important measure of living standards in this country. Some representatives of the "stronger sex" tend to think they have special status. But that kind of idea is out of date and has no chance of success, because it is in opposition to government policy and public opinion.

In fact, at the beginning of 1977, women accounted for almost 32 per cent and young people under 25 years of age for 12.2 per cent of the membership of the SED.

Price stability legally guaranteed

When talking about the standard of living, the next consideration after the average income is how much a family has to spend. How much are basic foodstuffs, how much is spent on rents and other charges? Is the cost of living rising or are stable prices guaranteed?

These are crucial questions for a family with an average budget. Even more so if several children have to be fed and clothed during their years at school, apprenticeships and university studies. A nominal rise in gross earnings, however substantial, makes no-one happy, if taxes and fees, rents and prices are going up just as fast or even faster.

In the GDR prices, rents and charges are stable. With a few minor exceptions, they are no higher then 10, 15 or 20 years ago. The party of the working class has constantly made sure prices remain stable. At its congresses the SED has always vigorously rejected any trend towards illegal prices increases. The five-year plans contain precise stipulations providing that no increases in retail prices of consumer goods may be introduced and that supplies in the lower price bracket are to be guaranteed in line with demand.

All staple foods, everyday commodities, children's and occupational clothing, service charges and tariffs are low and stable in the GDR. They represent no major burden on the family budget and, as constants, can be planned ahead month after month. The planned socialist economy gives no room for monetary crises and prevents inflationary currency devaluations.

To be sure, this does not mean that all difficulties have been overcome. Our economy started off in a difficult position in 1945: the destruction wrought by the war was compounded by major economic imbalances. While we had manufacturing capacity in the Soviet occupied zone, there was no basic industry to sustain it. To make things worse, we are a country poorly equipped with raw materials and largely dependent on imports. Hence the task of building up domestic industry to provide basic materials and creating an efficient export industry consumed a great deal of our potential and funds. To this we must add the losses incurred while we had an open frontier with the Federal Republic of Germany because of currency manipulations and the enticement away of trained personnel. Nor should we forget the economic boycott which was imposed on our country for many years.

Over and above this, the GDR suffers from the enormous rise in prices on the world market of raw materials, machinery or agricultural produce. We will not allow any cuts in our social welfare programme, and consumer prices are to remain stable. So we will have to calculate more accurately and consider more thoroughly what is feasible and what is not. This is made easier by the fact that the policy of economic security pursued by the GDR has met with a great response from the population who, on their part, want to use their wealth of ideas and the resources made available by scientific and technological progress to boost production.

People in our country do not live in affluence. But they do not know the deep gulf between indescribable opulence, luxury and extravagance on the one hand, and social decline, misery and hunger on the other. Nobody is allowed to enrich himself at the expense of other people's work. Fabulous villas and princely palaces, shelters for homeless people and slums, playboys and beggars, gambling casinos and poorhouses are non-existent in the GDR. Being citizens of a socialist state, all inhabitants of the GDR have a livelihood. They live in security, without extravagance but also without having to struggle to live.

Index of retail prices, service charges and fares for the entire population (1970 = 100)

	1960	1965	1976
Food and semi-luxuries	98.9	98.6	100.8
Consumer durables	103.7	103.4	95.1
Rents	98.9	98.9	100.0
Electricity, gas and water	100.0	100.0	100.0

Prices, rents and charges

Wages are a subject we have discussed already. They are constantly rising. But, of course, wages alone do not tell the reader very much. He must know what can be had for this money. And this not only applies to food and consumer durables but also to service charges, electricity and gas, railway and bus fares, rents and all sorts of fees.

All prices in the GDR are fixed by the government. Neither in production nor in retail trade it is allowed to change them arbitrarily. Most prices are fixed by the Price Board operating under the Council of Ministers. The Board exercises tight price control and, in its work, relies on the help of democratic bodies among the population, such as the committees of local assemblies, the Workers' and Farmers' Inspectorate and the retail shop committees. Any violation of price regulations entails prosecution.

Development of per-capita consumption of major foodstuffs

		1960	1965	1976
Meat	kg	55.0	58.7	80.7
Butter	kg	13.5	12.5	15.0
Milk	litre	94.5	94.1	102.8
Eggs		197	211	269
Vegetables	kg	60.7	63.8	84.3
Fruit	kg	80.1	46.5	68.7

The price policy of the socialist state is determined by clear social considerations: This means that all vital necessities for the families of industrial workers, office employees and farmers must remain cheap. For instance, for every 100 marks worth of staple foodstuffs a family buys the government allocates a subsidy of 26.90 marks to keep the prices stable. Every mark GDR citizens spend on fares is matched by 1.37 marks from the government. Rents have remained low, accounting for between four and six per cent of a family's income, including heating. Nobody has had or will have the right to raise rents. Government subsidies for housing exceeded 18,000 million marks in the period between 1971 and 1976. Prices of some industrial consumer durables and items that have to be imported and payed for in convertible currency (for instance, coffee) are relatively high.

The following table testifies to the stability of prices, which have remained essentially unchanged while incomes have risen by twothirds. Many commodities on offer in 1960 are no longer available today for obvious reasons. They have been replaced by new, more up-to-date and qualitatively better ones. This holds true, for instance, of certain cosmetics and cleaning agents, where a series of effective and time-saving sprays have been brought onto the market at prices which correspond to their improved quality. But the principle remains valid that goods that have proved themselves useful in the household will continue to be produced and will cost just the same as years ago.

Price list for 1960 and 1976 (in marks)

		1960	1977
Foods/semi-luxuries			
Bread, mixed wheat and rye	1 kg	0.52	0.52
White bread	1 kg	1.00	1.00
Rolls	one	0.05	0.05
Cube sugar	1 kg	1.70	1.70
Flaked oats	1 kg	0.98	0.98
Semolina	1 kg	1.34	1.34
Potatoes[1]	5 kg	0.60	0.89
Carrots	1 kg	0.37	0.50
Oranges	1 kg	4.00	4.00
Milk in plastics bags	1 litre	0.70	0.70
Standard butter	1 kg	10.00	10.00
Eggs	one	0.37	0.34
Margarine (ordinary variety)	1 kg	3.00	3.00
Cheese (Gouda)	1 kg	7.20	7.20
Pig's lard	1 kg	3.10	3.10

[1] Not including imported new potatoes, which in the capital, Berlin, for instance, cost 4.05 marks per 5 kg.

Stewing beef	1 kg	5.80	5.80
Roast beef	1 kg	9.80	9.80
Pork chops	1 kg	8.00	8.00
Liver sausage	1 kg	6.20	6.20
Salted herrings	1 kg	1.76	1.68
Tobacco	50 g	3.00	3.00
Brandy	0.7 litre	17.50	22.00
Coffee	100 g	6.00	7.00
Consumer durables			
Children's shoes		16.30	18.00
Ladies' stockings (top quality)		11.60	4.00
Bed-linen, linon, 1.28 by 2.00 metres		23.00	21.80
Vacuum cleaner (550 W)		235.00	195.00
Men's bicycle		242.00	242.00
Sewing machine		662.00	662.00
Lignite briquettes	50 kg	1.70	1.70

What has been said here about prices and rents also holds good for electricity and gas charges, fares, postal rates and other service charges (prices given in marks):

	1960	1976
Services		
Railway, weekly season ticket (15 km)	2.50	2.50
Railway (50 km), second class	4.00	4.00
Tram (large cities)	0.20	0.20
Bus	0.20	0.20
Underground	0.20	0.20
S-Bahn (city railway), Berlin, urban area	0.20	0.20
Electricity, 1 kWh (domestic rate)	0.08	0.08
Gas, 1 cubic metre (domestic rate)	0.16	0.16
Postal rates		
Letter, local delivery	0.10	0.10
Letter, inland and socialist countries	0.20	0.20
Postcard, inland and socialist countries	0.10	0.10
Express delivery	0.50	0.50
Local call, public telephone box	0.20	0.20
Money order, 25.01 to 100 marks	0.40	0.40
Telephone, flat rate	9.00	9.00

How safe are savings deposits?

The value of money has almost doubled in the GDR between 1950 and 1970. The purchasing power of the mark has even risen further since then.

Index of the purchasing power of the GDR mark (1970 = 100)

1950	1960	1965	1970	1976
53.1	99.1	99.1	100	101.6

For savers in the GDR it is most reassuring to know this. At no time were their savings deposits menaced by inflation. What they have put by has a higher purchasing power now not only because it earns interest but also because there has been a considerable improvement in the quality of consumer goods.

Small wonder, therefore, that savings deposits per head of the population are constantly rising. Whereas they amounted on average to roughly 1,000 marks in 1960, they stood at 3,266 marks in 1970 and had reached 4,800 marks by the end of 1976. As we said before, there are neither multi-millionaires nor beggars in the GDR, so this average is not distorted but is a true reflection of reality.

Overall savings deposits of the population in credit banks (in million marks)

1960	1965	1970	1976
17,500	31,300	52,100	80,200

III.

Who runs the country?

Only when they are masters of their own destiny can the working people have a constantly rising standard of living, corresponding to the work they have put in, which is unaffected by crises or war. So: Who holds power in the GDR? In whose interests are laws drafted and decisions taken? What influence does the individual have? Who runs the country?

The working class gives the lead

It is an old saying, based on experience, that whoever holds economic power also holds political power. Public ownership of the means of production forms the firm basis of socialist state power in the GDR. As in all socialist countries, state power is vested in the working class. Led by its party, the SED, it has created a socialist state of workers and farmers.

A major principle of policy pursued for the last three decades is that all sections of the population, irrespective of their world outlook, should find their place under socialism. This is why the SED, from the very outset, tried to create a broad alliance of all citizens, which developed within the National Front of the GDR, where parties and mass organizations unite all forces of the people and mobilize them into joint action for the further development of socialist society.

All organs of the socialist state are guided by the interests of workers and cooperative farmers, intellectuals and professional people, artists, tradespeople and craftsmen—in short, by the interests of working people. In line with the structure of the overall population, the majority of all officers of central and local government departments are recruited from the working class.

The ideas and proposals, the needs and interests of working people are therefore given close attention. No-one will find himself at a disadvantage before any institution—whether an authority, housing commission or court of law—because he is "only" a worker. On the contrary, the word of the working man or woman carries weight at all levels of state and society.

Erich Honecker, a miner's son and roofer by trade, serves as chairman of the GDR's Council of State. He is a battle-tested functionary and communist and, because of his anti-fascist activities, he was sentenced to ten years in jail by Hitler's hangmen. After 1945, Erich Honecker devoted his activities to work among young people. He was among the co-founders of the Free German Youth and was in charge of the youth federation until 1955. For many years a member of the Politbureau of the SED Central Committee, he was elected the party's First Secretary in 1971 and the 9th SED Congress elected him General Secretary.

Willi Stoph, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, is a mason and builder by trade. He was still very young when he joined the revolutionary workers' movement and was persecuted for it by the Nazis. Since 1945, he has been an official in the working-class party and the socialist state. The same applies to Horst Sindermann, President of the People's Chamber, who was for eleven years held in fascist jails and concentration camps. Many ministers' lives have taken a similar course.

The Council of Ministers, which is the government of the GDR, is made up of representatives from all parties. Its sphere of jurisdiction and tasks are laid down in detail in the Council of Ministers Act of 1972.

The SED—the decisive political force

The Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Marxist-Leninist party of the working class, is the decisive political force in the GDR.

Its Programme, its practical activities and social composition show the SED to be a genuine party of the working-class, which at the same time represents the interests of the entire people. It was under its leadership that the anti-fascist democratic revolution was carried out, that the foundations of socialism were laid and that an advanced socialist society is today being constructed in the GDR as the basis for the gradual transition to communism. The SED arouses and encourages all citizens to take intiatives to further develop socialist society and, in this, the constructive cooperation of all parties and organizations is particularly important.

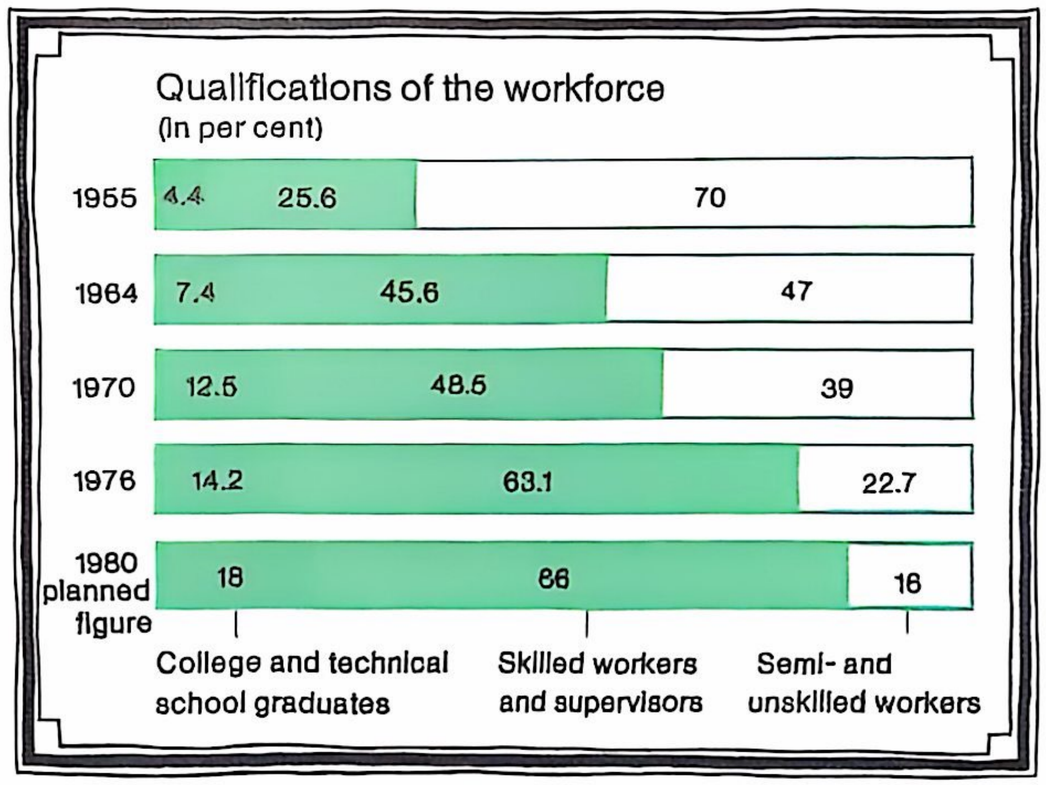
There are five political parties in the GDR. Communists and social democrats merged in 1946 to form the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Immediately after the end of the war, the Christian Democratic Union and the Liberal Democratic Party were founded, followed in 1948 by the Democratic Farmers' Party and the National Democratic Party which unite members from specific groups of the population. The Democratic Bloc is the institution uniting all GDR parties and large organizations. As a general rule, it meets once a month to discuss all major political questions prior to decision-making by the People's Chamber. Representatives of the individual parties and mass organizations take turns in presiding over meetings. Nobody is at a disadvantage in the Democratic Bloc as all decisions must be taken unanimously.

The over-riding principle underlying the work of the SED was formulated by Erich Honecker in the following way: "We know but one aim that permeates the entire policy of our party; to do everything for the well-being of man, for the happiness of the people, for the interests of the working class and all working people. This is what socialism is all about. This is what we are working and striving for."

With this aim in mind, the SED considers it to be its task to give political guidance to social development in the German Democratic Republic, with a scientific approach in its strategy and tactics.

One in six GDR citizens over 18 years of age is a member or candidate member of the SED. The social composition of the SED testifies to the fact that there is a community of interests between the party and the people: workers account for 55.9 per cent, cooperative farmers for 5.0 per cent, intellectuals and professional people for 20.6 per cent and office employees for 11.5 per cent of the 2.07 million members and candidate members of the SED. The members of the SED, who have united in a voluntary fighting alliance of like-minded people, regard it as their duty and as a matter of honour to take the lead on all matters both in discussion and in action.

The 8th Congress of the SED in 1971 marked the beginning of a new phase of development of the SED and the GDR. It mapped out the road for the further construction of socialist society and emphasized the need further to strengthen the leading position of the working class in all spheres of life and to raise its share in the national income. This course was



confirmed by the 9th Congress in 1976. The two congresses adopted a great number of social welfare measures designed to bring the objective advantages of socialism out more fully, i.e., to make the life of all working people more satisfying, rich and pleasant. The relationship of trust between the party and the people has grown further as a result. The overwhelming majority of people in the GDR consider the leading role of the SED in the state and the economy to be one of their most important achievements.

The influence of the trade unions

With its membership of 8.3 million, the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions is the biggest public organization in the GDR. Its membership has increased by one million over the past five years. The working class exerts much of its influence on public affairs through the trade unions. Their extensive rights to mass participation in all fields of national life in building advanced socialism are stipulated in the Constitution. The trade unions are independent and nobody is allowed to restrict or hamper their activities.

The trade unions have a group of their own in Parliament. Comprising 68 members, it is the second largest parliamentary group. By drafting a new Labour Code, which will come into force on 1 January 1978, they have used their constitutional right to initiate legislation on a question closely affecting the working people. The rights of the trade unions, as the representatives of all working people's interests, have been expanded and defined more precisely in this new Code.

The government cooperates closely with the trade unions. All important Bills relating to working and living conditions are discussed jointly and adopted only with the unions' agreement. Our social welfare programme was launched by joint decision of the workers' party, the trade unions and the government. Suggestions and proposals submitted by the trade unions for the annual economic plans are carefully studied by the Council of Ministers and incorporated in the plan.

Cooperation between the socialist organs of government and the trade unions has reached new hights during the past few years. Full agreement on aims does not preclude discussions on the methods to be employed nor does it mean there will not be, sometimes, different approaches to individual concrete problems.

The role of the trade unions will be increased further in the process of continued socialist construction. They are schools of socialism and, over and above this, they see to it that the legally guaranteed rights of working people are enforced. Working people have the opportunity to cooperate in a creative manner and prove themselves in the trade unions. Over two million trade unionists are active in some representative function, for instance, as shop stewards, national insurance representatives (national insurance for workers and office employees is administered by the trade unions), industrial safety representatives, members of arbitration commissions or other part-time functions.

Who runs the state and the economy?

When the omnipotence of the big companies was shattered, the hour of freedom and democracy had come for the working population. A completely new state emerged. From the top downwards, i.e., from Parliament via the government and county and district councils to the armed forces, police and judiciary, representatives of the working class together with other working people hold all key posts. There is no class of top bureaucrats and managing directors.

That workers or the sons and daughters of workers have the biggest say in the state and the economy can be proved in detail:

Members of Parliament	54 per cent
Deputies of local assemblies	42 per cent
Mayors of towns and villages	70 per cent
Managers of socialist enterprises	75 per cent
Public prosecutors	78 per cent

Almost three quarters of all judges come from working-class families or were workers themselves. 14 per cent are office employees by social origin, four per cent farmers, one per cent intellectuals and professional people and six per cent craftsmen and tradespeople.

It should be added that judges in the GDR present themselves to the public for nomination, are elected by representative bodies (Parliament and local assemblies) and report back to them on their activities. There is no class justice alien to the people.

Seventy per cent of all officers of the People's Police and the National People's Army also have a working-class background. Top officers in the police force and armed forces generally have a labour or trade union record or fought actively against Nazism. The youngest among them have been educated in the socialist youth federation and all of them have attended socialist military academies.

Hence the representatives of the workers' and farmers' power have all come from among the people, of whom they form part and whose interests they serve.

Who makes the laws and for whom?

In whose interests laws are drafted and enacted in a country greatly depends on the social composition of Parliament.

In the People's Chamber, the GDR's supreme law-making body, industrial workers and office employees account for 72 per cent, cooperative farmers, market-gardeners and fishermen for 12 per cent and intellectuals and professional people for 15 per cent of the 500 M.P.s. Obviously, such a Parliament does not adopt legislation directed against the working population. There are neither professional parliamentarians, lobbies and corruption nor agreements concluded by companies with individual M.P.s to secure influence in Parliament.

Represented in the People's Chamber are all major political and public organizations. The SED, the party of the working class, has the strongest parliamentary group (127 deputies). Next comes the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB) with 68. The four other parties in the Democratic Bloc—the Democratic Farmers' Party (DBD), the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD) and the National Democratic Party (NDPD)—each have 52 M.P.s. The youth organization (FDJ), the women's organization (DFD) and the League of Culture of the GDR are represented by 40, 35 and 22 deputies, respectively.

In the GDR it is now standard practice to submit important Bills to the whole population for public discussion. Cases in point were the socialist Constitution, the Family Code, the Local Government Act and the Civil Code. In each instance, many thousands of constructive ideas and proposals for amendments were made, which were then reconsidered, examined and incorporated into the final version of the Bill.

The same was true of the new Labour Code which was drafted under the guidance of the trade unions and published in January 1977. The draft was discussed throughout the country over several months, with 5.8 million working people taking part. 147,806 proposals, suggestions and inquiries were submitted which, after eliminating repetitions, led to 90 revisions in the contents and 144 editorial changes being incorporated into the final version. The draft was approved by the 9th FDGB Congress in May 1977. Afterwards the parliamentary group of the trade unions submitted it to the People's Chamber where the Code was made law in June 1977.

A draft of the new Youth Act, too, was discussed over seven months, with more than 5.4 million citizens of all age groups taking part. A total of 4,821 proposals were tabled which resulted in about 200 amendments to the draft.

Participation ensured for all

Socialist democracy is characterized by the active participation of a vast proportion of the working population in public affairs, in decision-making on major issues and in solving

social problems. And the same goes for all spheres of life. Everyone has a say in this country. In fact, one adult citizen in four already does so voluntarily for the benefit of his fellow-citizens. A wide range of opportunities has been created for this.

- 200,000 citizens represent the population as elected deputies at national, county, district, town and village level.
- 456,200 citizens cooperate with deputies in the standing commissions and working parties of the elected representative bodies in various fields.
- 80,200 elected lay magistrates administer justice alongside the professional judges at district and county courts.
- 272,000 citizens are elected members of disputes commissions in enterprises and dispute commissions in neighbourhoods, which deal with minor offences and complaints without recourse to law courts.
- 201,000 citizens are voluntary aides to the Workers' and Farmers' Inspectorate, which checks on the observance of legal provisions and takes action over violations of price regulations and waste of public property.
- 678,900 citizens discuss and help decide schooling problems in parent-teacher associations and parents' advisory committees.
- 345,000 members of all political parties and non-affiliated people serve on the committees and working groups of the National Front for the welfare of fellow-citizens in their neighbourhoods.

This goes to show that the running of public and economic affairs in a socialist society is not a privilege of professional politicians but a matter for the whole population. It is quite obvious that, for any working person, it is more satisfying to know that his advice is sought, that his voice carries weight and that he readily gets a hearing than to know that his civic role is confined to creating material wealth whose distribution, use and allocation he may not influence. The real influence which all citizens bring to bear on the everyday running of public affairs is an essential factor in the high quality of life under socialism.

IV.

Who controls the country's wealth?

The question as to who controls the country's wealth, who owns the mines, the big industrial enterprises, and the land, in brief the means of production, is of crucial importance for the living conditions of working people. This has been shown by history.

Who owns the factories and offices?

In the GDR, as a socialist state, all the country's wealth is now the property of the people: mineral resources, factories, banks and insurance companies, department stores and means of transport. Workers not only get their wages but are also the owners of the nationally-owned enterprises. There are no capitalist corporations or shareholders to live off their work.

As for industry, all workers and office employees work in nationally-owned enterprises. They account for 100 per cent of the country's industrial output. What they produce is entirely for the benefit of the whole working population. Public property came into existence in a very democratic manner. On 30 June 1946, 78 per cent of all those taking part in a referendum held in Saxony called for the nationalization of firms owned by capitalist war profiteers. Ever since, the working class and its party have made every effort to multiply and to develop the property of the people.

Socialist relations of production also prevail in the agriculture of the GDR. Under a democratic land reform in 1945 all of the feudal and capitalist landed property was expropriated. Between 1952 and 1961, the farmers pooled their holdings in cooperative farms, large and efficient agricultural enterprises using modern equipment and advanced farming methods. In 1976, socialist agricultural production cooperatives and state farms employed almost all those engaged in agriculture and forestry. They accounted for 96.4 per cent of the net agricultural produce.

Finally, it should be mentioned that socialist relations of production are also increasingly emerging in the drafts, also in the form of cooperatives. In 1976, there were more than 2,790 craft production cooperatives with roughly 143,000 members, i.e. about two per cent of the GDR's workforce. They turned out work worth 5,500 million marks.

As things stand today, the different forms of ownership produce the following percentages of the GDR's net product:

Socialist enterprises	96 per cent
Enterprises with state participation	1 per cent
Private enterprises	3 per cent

There are two forms of socialist property in the GDR: general public property belonging to the whole community and cooperative property jointly owned by members of a cooperative. Alongside these, there are still self-employed craftsmen and retail dealers who enjoy the support of the socialist state in consideration of the role they play in the service sector. In addition, traditional family firms, employing one or two people, have their prospects for the future legally guaranteed.

The socialist system of property is guaranteed in the Constitution of the GDR, as is the personal property of citizens and the right to inheritance. Private associations, of whatever kind, for the establishment of economic power are prohibited.

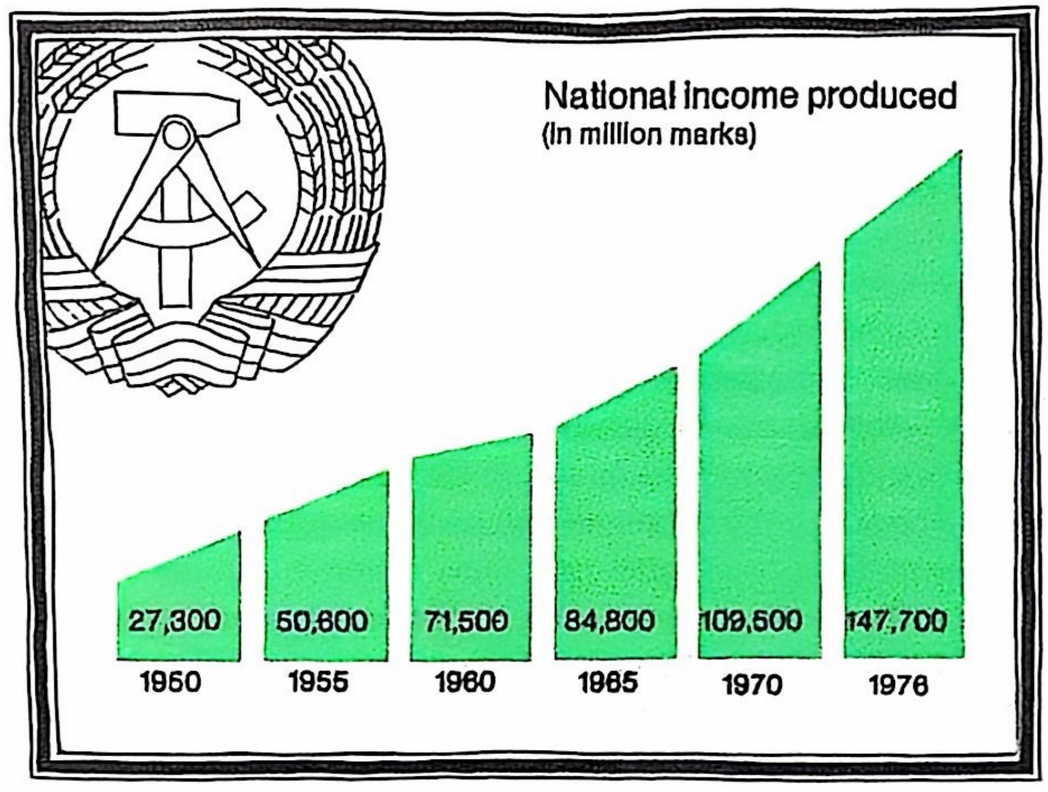
For all those employed in socialist enterprises, the change in the form of ownership not only affected their legal relationship to their place of work but also their entire status in the enterprise, the community and the state. They are the owners of the factories, and the works' managers—most of them of working-class origin, trained and appointed by the socialist state—are accountable to them as their trustees.

Whatever workers, engineers and cooperative farmers in the GDR make with their hands, whatever ideas they put forward to improve techniques and develop new products will be for their own benefit and for that of the whole of society.

For whose benefit is production?

Whatever is produced under socialism is directly or indirectly for the benefit of the producer.

Firstly, directly in the shape of wages, salaries, bonuses and end-of-year bonuses. This is known as individual consumption.



Secondly, in the form of social services, stable prices, spending on health, education, cultural facilities, holiday schemes etc. This is known as public consumption and is regulated by the national budget.

Thirdly, in the shape of the enlargement, modernization and construction of nationally-owned enterprises. This is known as accumulation, which provides the basis for continued expansion and improvement of production in order to satisfy people's needs to an ever greater extent.

To put it in a nutshell: Any progress achieved in raising labour productivity leads to improvements in people's living standards and the quality of their life.

In 1976, the GDR's national income amounted to 147,700 million marks representing an increase of 33,700 million marks on 1971. Its distribution was as follows:

Consumption	77.1 per cent
of which: individual	66.4 per cent
public	10.7 per cent
Accumulation	22.9 per cent

It can be seen from this that people's pay is the main source of their income. The amount of wages paid is fixed in agreements covering the individual branches of the economy drawn up between the competent authorities of the socialist state and the trade unions. They are confirmed by the State Secretariat for Employment and Wages and thus given binding force. The principle of payment according to work done is the lynchpin of socialist wages policy. Since 1971, the incomes of industrial workers and office employees have increased by between four and five per cent annually.

Over and above the standard wages, there exists a vast system of bonuses paid to acknowledge outstanding results in production. All nationally-owned enterprises are required by law to set up a bonus fund into which is put part of the net profit of the enterprise concerned, depending on the extent to which the planned output and the key plan targets are attained or exceeded (quantity, quality, prime costs, etc.).

The maximum contribution to the bonus fund by the firm rose to over 900 marks a year per employee and the minimum—paid when the plan is not fulfilled—is 80 per cent of the planned bonus fund. The fund is used to reward special achievements and initiatives to raise output, increase quality and improve working and living-conditions.

In addition, end-of-year bonuses are regularly paid to wage earners and salaried staff. Depending on the level of plan fulfilment, length of service and achievements, they may be as high as 150 per cent of a person's net monthly earnings, the minimum limit being some 80 per cent of the net monthly earnings.

Average end-of-year bonuses per industrial worker and office employee

1970	1975
502 marks	916 marks

How are profits divided up?

We have just mentioned the bonus fund. But this is only part of the total profit made by an enterprise. It adds to people's individual wages. Under socialism, profits are, however, also widely used for a variety of fringe benefits. Hence the profits made largely serve public consumption.

Depending on labour productivity, product quality and the reduction of prime costs enterprises set up a fund for improving working conditions, building holiday camps and rest homes or owner-occupied houses for workers. Part of the profits are earmarked for fringe benefits. These include various cultural and sporting activities and social welfare measures.

This explains why nationally-owned enterprises have their own sports centres and houses of culture, that a large proportion of the staff regularly attend theatre or concert performances at little cost and that many form amateur choirs

and orchestras, song groups, painting circles, amateur film studios or workers' dramatic societies. All this is generously and systematically promoted using the enterprise's funds.

Substantial sums from the fringe benefits fund are spend on subsidizing meals, which firms provide at an average price of 70 or 80 pfennigs. Most of our enterprises and institutions have their own canteen. In large factories, employees may choose between a variety of meals, with prices ranging from 60 pfennigs to 2 marks.

But enterprises do not keep all their profits themselves. Contributions from nationally-owned enterprises and combines are the chief source of revenue for the national budget. In this way, they serve both to develop the socialist economy, e.g. by expanding its energy base, and to improve everyone's working and living conditions.

The amount enterprises have to contribute out of their profits to the public treasury is not the same everywhere. It is fixed by the State Planning Commission, working together with the enterprises, with due consideration being given to the type of production and special circumstances of the firms concerned.

What are public funds?

Working people's living standards under socialism are largely determined by the amount of public funds available and by the way they are distributed. They represent earnings that must be added to a person's wage and that have a tangible effect on the living standard of the family of any industrial worker or office employee.

Apart from guaranteeing equal educational opportunities, health services of a high standard and the promotion of art and culture, they are earmarked for specifically social purposes: they are used to peg the prices of staple foods and consumer durables such as children's clothing; they help keep rents and charges low; they make it possible to have a child cared for at a kindergarten for no more than 15 marks a month, and so on.

The amount of public funds allocated to the overall development of a cultured, socialist way of life grows even faster than individual wages, e.g. by 13 per cent in 1976. A family of four received the following amounts a month from public consumption funds:

1970	1973	1976	1980 (planned figure)
360 marks	470 marks	610 marks	680 marks

In the period between 1971 and 1975, 15,000 million marks were allocated from public funds for housing and rents, 60,000 million marks to keep prices and tariffs stable and 41,000 million marks for national insurance.

All this goes to show that under socialism the profits created by workers find their way back into their pockets in some way or another. There is nobody living at their expense. The declared aim of socialism to do everything possible for a better life of the working class and all working people, is no dream of the future. It is discernible today, in the shape of higher wages and pensions, better working conditions, new benefits and allowances for families with children, for women and mothers, for shift-workers and in the form of wider ranges of high-quality goods available.

Whom does the plan serve?

In the GDR, as in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, the plan serves the people and their needs are the decisive yardstick for working out any plan. It serves to implement our central policy, i.e., the further improvement of people's living and cultural standards through a high rate of development of socialist production, increased efficiency, scientific and technological progress and growing labour productivity.

The planned socialist economy ensures harmonious, stable and crisis-free development in all branches of the

economy. It makes it possible for double working, wastage and structural and over-production crises to be eliminated.

Let us take a closer look at some of the key figures contained in the current Five-Year Plan for the development of the GDR's national economy between 1976 and 1980: Manufacturing output is to grow by 34 per cent over the 1975 figure to attain an overall volume of 312,000 million marks in 1980. This is equivalent to an increase of 79,000 million marks. The national income is to rise by 28 per cent in the same period. This is 200,000 million marks more than was earned in the five preceding years. Labour productivity is to grow by 30 per cent by 1980, the annual increase being some 6 per cent. In 1980, 1,200 million marks worth of commodities will be produced per day, as against 930 million marks worth in 1975.

Net monetary incomes for the population are envisaged to rise by 21.4 per cent which is equivalent to an annual growth of between 4 and 4.3 per cent—not included allocations from continually growing public funds, which add to working people's real incomes.

These aggregate figures are indicative of the basic line followed in our economy, which stresses intensification and continual growth. The plan stipulates in detail which sectors and branches are to be given priority attention and at what speed they are to be developed, so that still existing gaps in ranges of commodities or price brackets can be filled as quickly as possible.

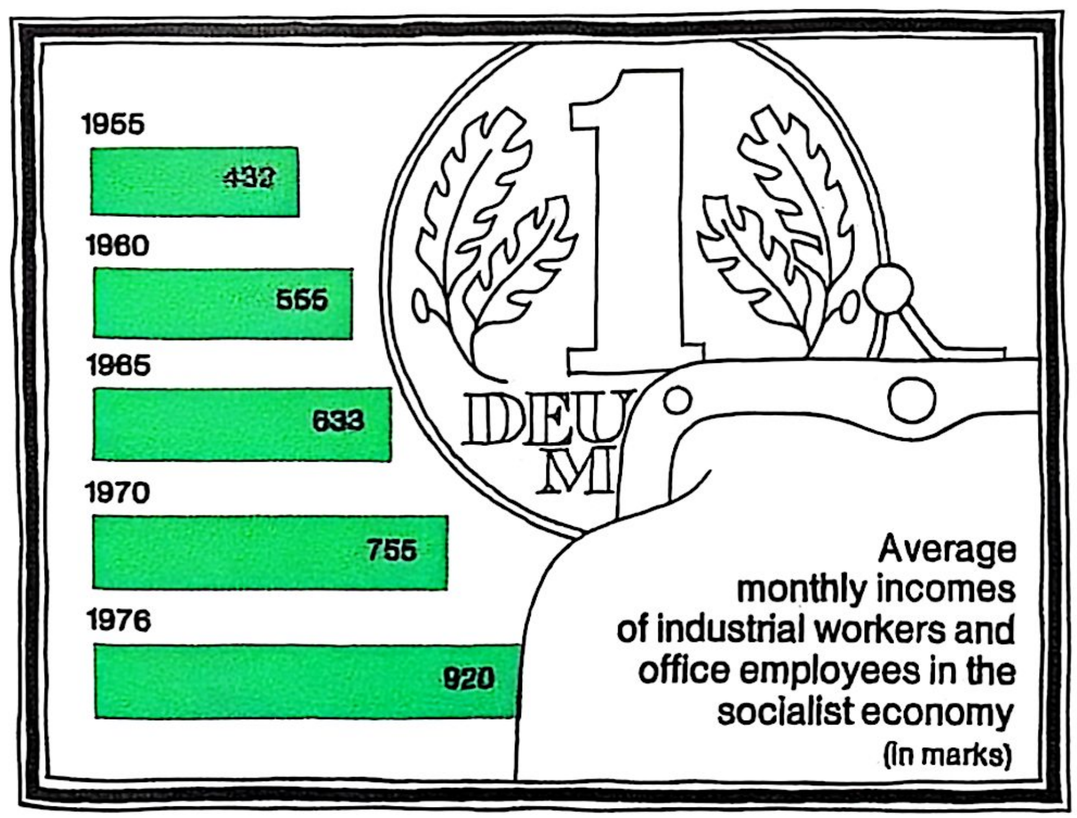
And how is a plan drawn up?

In a word: democratically. It is not a decree prepared behind closed doors by some group of anonymous people. Nor is it imposed on the workers in their firms by administrative methods. Overall planning of society is a characteristic feature and inherent advantage of socialism.

There is a special central planning body in our workers' and farmers' state, the State Planning Commission, which comes under the GDR government and is, thus, answerable to Parliament. Making a thorough-going analysis of national economic development, the planning commission cooperates with the various ministries to lay the foundations for long-term planning and five-year and annual plans. In doing so, they rely on scientific forecasts for longer periods ahead.

Plan targets, which are broken down into figures for individual branches of the national economy, are then fixed for enterprises and institutions in "plan directives". These are discussed by the employees concerned. New proposals are put forward and initiatives proposed, which are then summarized in what is known as the enterprises draft plan. Only after this process is the revised and budgeted plan discussed by the People's Chamber and put into force.

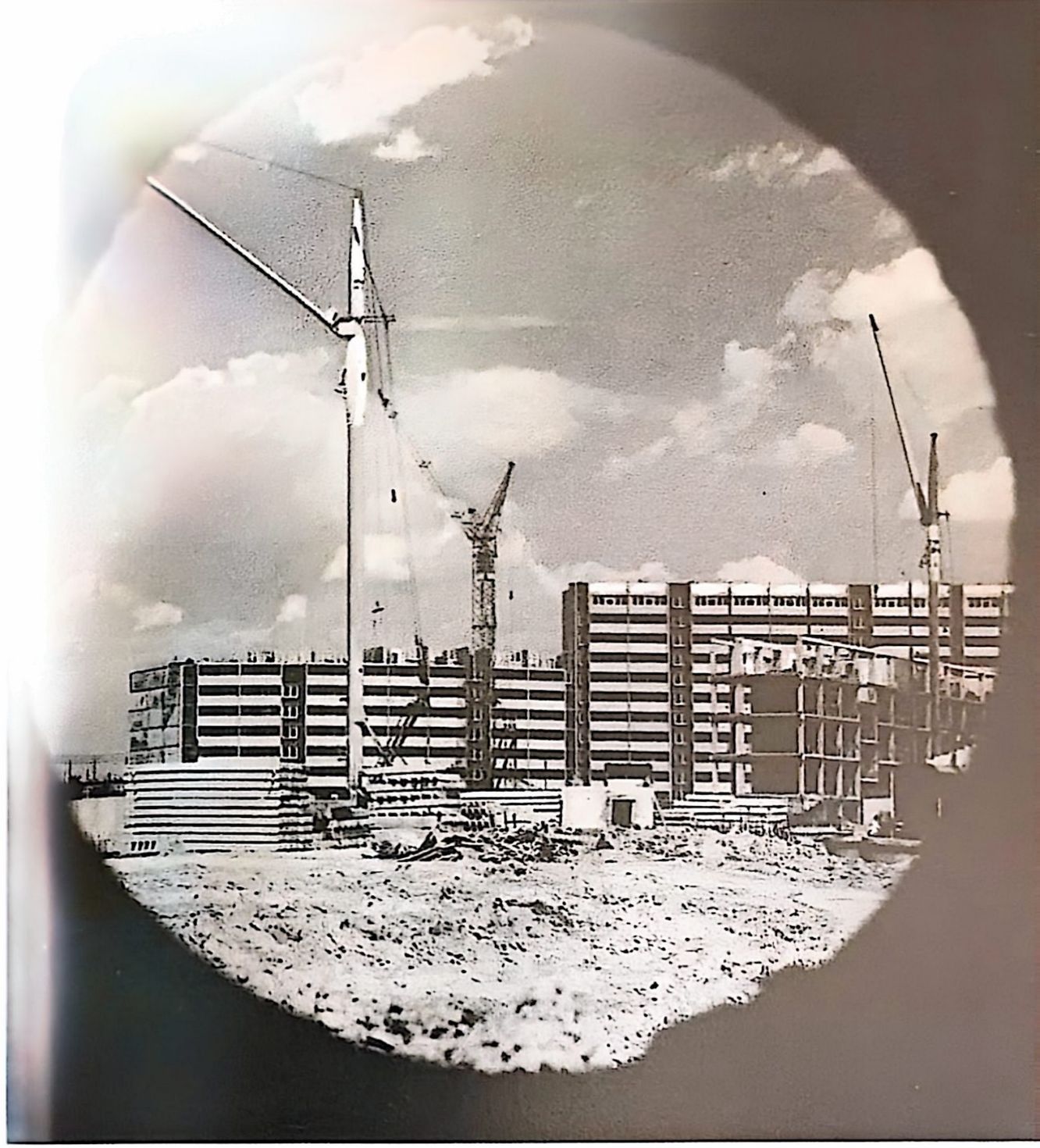
Our planned socialist economy is highly effective, as is shown by its high and stable rates of growth. There is no lagging-behind in the fulfilment of major social tasks, nor any neglect of the infrastructure, e.g. the education system, health and social services, or of the human environment in

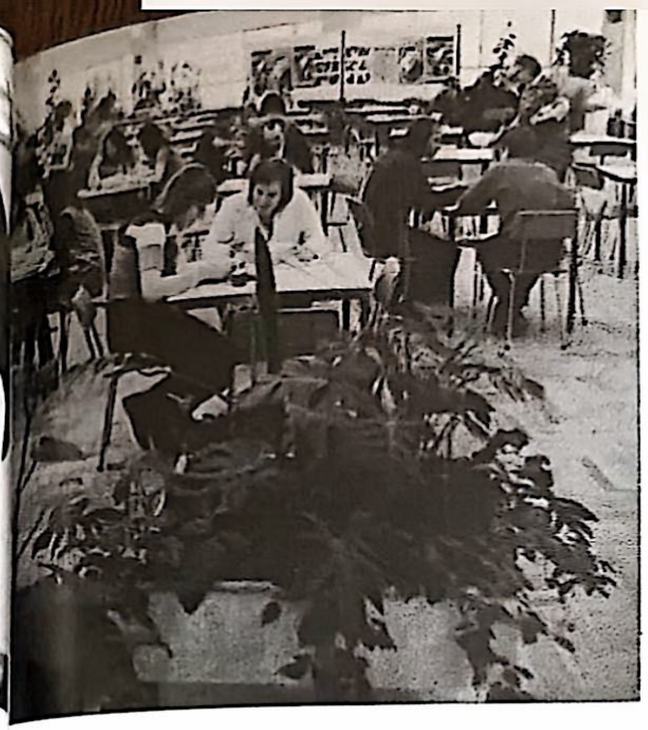


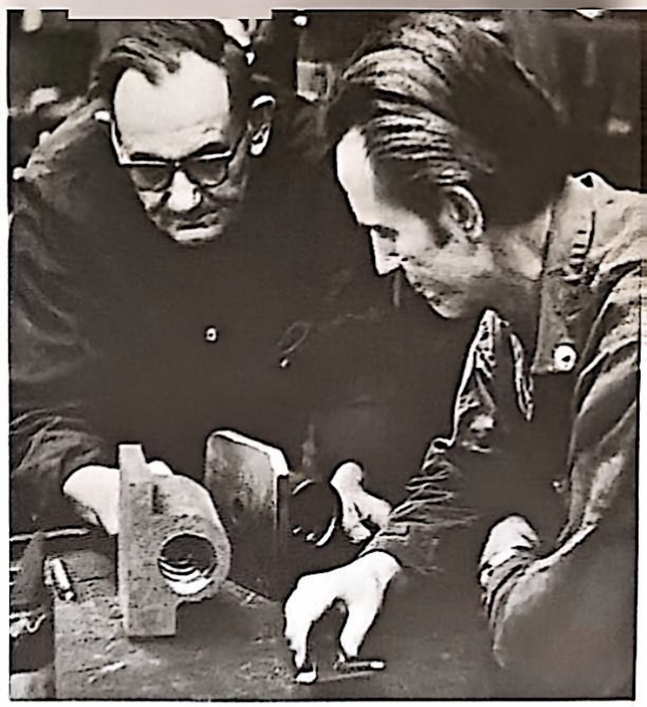
favour of private profits. It is not affected by cut-throat competition, crises, unemployment or inflationary de-valuations of money.

In the process of socialist integration, our economy is linked by ever closer ties with the national economies of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Our joint long-term integration programme enables us to coordinate our work and cooperate in questions ranging from research and development to production and distribution. This tends to cut costs and increase the potential of the individual countries, which, in turn, has a beneficial effect on people's standard of living.

We do not conceal, however, that we have not yet fully exploited all the possibilities offered by the planned socialist economy and that new problems are arising all the time. For example, fashionable articles call for greater flexibility in planning, so that people's needs can be satisfied ever more fully.





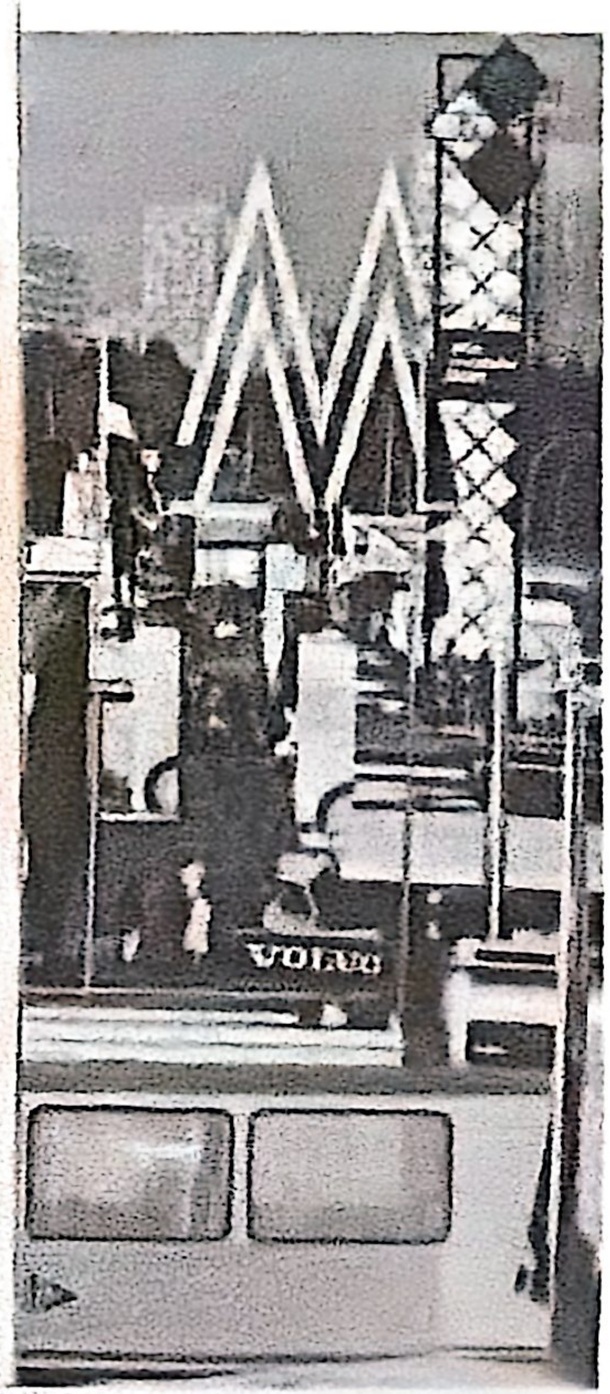


The trade unions' right to a say enables all working people to share in management and planning. Eberhard Birko from the housing construction firm in Karl Marx Stadt is a member of his plant's sub-branch committee and Ella Streicher from the Brandenburg steel and rolling mill serves on the disputes commission. Low-priced meals are served to working people in the works canteen of the textile complex in Cottbus. The innovators' team of the nationally-owned Bergmann-Borsig works in Berlin have undertaken to save materials and cut down costs (above, from left to right).

Up-to-date plant frees man from heavy physical labour and helps raise labour productivity. Pictured is an automatic flame cutter in Leipzig's Kirov works (left).

The GDR's housing construction programme places higher demands also on the netting and curtain producers in Falkenstein. They undertook to produce additional quantities in their 1977 emulation drive to mark the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution (right).

New housing estate in Potsdam on the Havel (preceding page).



Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SED Central Committee (right), headed the GDR delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe which took place in 1975. The Final Act of Helsinki serves the maintenance of peace and opens up new avenues in the field of international cooperation (above)
Bustling activity is characteristic of Leipzig's Trade Fairs held every spring and autumn (below)

V.

What are our relations with other countries like?

Inner harmony and a healthy life largely depend on external factors. Nothing could impair the dynamic and harmonious development of socialism more than international tension, threats of war and the arms race. This is why the socialist countries, including the GDR, have made it the main principle of their foreign policy to create the most favourable external conditions for peaceful construction work within their countries

First and foremost: fascism has been overcome

Two devastating world wars originated this century on German soil. The working class will never forget that these two catastrophes were not fortuitous but had real economic and political causes, i.e., the imperialist corporations' striving after economic and territorial expansion, arms production and war profits. The imperialist German great power ambitions were put into practice by Hitler fascism, which surrendered unconditionally on 8 May 1945 when the Soviet Army and the Allied troops had liberated even the remotest corner of the former German Reich.

All peoples in Europe were thus offered the chance to live in peace as good neighbours. The German people had the opportunity of taking an antifascist and democratic road. Five weeks after the end of the Second World War, demo-

cratic parties were permitted in the Soviet occupation zone, this being a major step along the new road.

On 11 June 1945, the Communist Party of Germany issued a manifesto calling upon the people to eradicate fascism, its evil spirit and its economic foundations. The first of its ten demands was for the "Complete liquidation of the remnants of the Hitler regime and Hitler's party. Cooperation between all honest Germans in tracing all Nazi leaders, Gestapo spies and SS criminals. Purging Nazi activists from all public posts. Punishment of war criminals..." Point three called for the reorganization of the administration of justice, severe punishment for all manifestations of race hatred, the "cleansing of the entire educational system from fascist and reactionary filth", while the sixth demand emphasized the need to expropriate Nazi activists and war criminals and transfer their property into the hands of the people. At the end of its manifesto the KPD declared: "We advocate peaceful and good-neighbourly relations with other nations; we are resolutely opposed to policies of aggression and force, conquest and robbery vis-à-vis other peoples."

All these demands were put into practice by the united working class of the GDR. Visitors to our country can see with their own eyes what results we have achieved with our consistently antifascist policy. Fascist machinations, the Hitler cult, glorification of the Nazi army and their generals and racism are non-existent in the GDR. We have made a clean break, once and for all with that reactionary chapter in the history of our people. Neither in schoolbooks nor in the mass media is there the slightest trace of the evil spirit of Nazism. Nowhere in the GDR's public life is there room for reactionary ideology or hostility towards other nations.

As things stand today, the GDR maintains normal diplomatic relations with over 120 countries, actively cooperates in the United Nations Organization, is a member of many international organizations, enjoys respect among its friends and has even won the respect of its enemies. All of this is, first and foremost, due to the fact that fascism has fully and completely been overcome in our country.

Confident of a genuine peace policy

What is the reason why GDR citizens are, now as ever, convinced that the foreign policy pursued by their government is always aimed at ensuring peace, good-neighbourly relations and international understanding?

A Protection of Peace Act has been in force in the GDR since 1952, an Act making war propaganda and war preparations of whatever kind liable to most severe punishment. The GDR Constitution stipulates that manifestations of hatred against creeds, races and nations shall be punished as crimes. Our up-and-coming generation is educated from early childhood in the spirit of friendship with all nations. Our soldiers are well aware of the fact that by defending their country they are also defending peace. The conviction that the GDR, alongside the other countries of the socialist community, pursues a genuine peace policy is, above all, based on the knowledge that socialism and peace belong together.

The working class, as the ruling class in the GDR, considers the right of all peoples to life, peace and social progress to be inalienable. Expansionism, racism and nationalism are alien to its humanistic ideal.

- Under socialism there are no grounds for armament and aggression, because nobody could draw profit from them. Our high economic and social welfare aims could not be realized in times of war. They presuppose peace.
- We recognize the frontiers that have come into existence as a result of the Second World War and, consequently, raise no territorial claims against our neighbours.
- Our foreign policy is fully and completely in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter. It is based on respect for the sovereignty of peoples, renunciation of the use of force or the threat to use force in international relations, respect for the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, recognition of all peoples' right to self-determination and equal participation of all states in the solution of fundamental international problems.

- We work for an end to the arms race at the earliest possible date and the introduction of measures to bring about arms limitation and disarmament. We want to employ the greatest possible amount of our funds to improve further the living standards of the entire people.

  This is what we have in mind when we say our aim is to ensure the most favourable external conditions for the continued construction of socialism and communism.

Good friends stand by our side

Article 6 of the GDR's Constitution reads: "The German Democratic Republic is for ever and irrevocably allied with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The close and fraternal alliance with it guarantees the people of the German Democratic Republic continued progress along the road of socialism and peace."

The main priority for our foreign policy has thus been fixed, i.e., firm integration of the GDR in the community of socialist nations. It is an alliance of a completely new type for us. All countries united in the community have an idential socio-economic and political base. The working class occupies a leading position in all of them and public ownership of the means of production is dominant. It is the first time in the history of mankind that such a large and stable community of states and peoples are jointly putting into practice their modern theory of society—Marxism-Leninism.

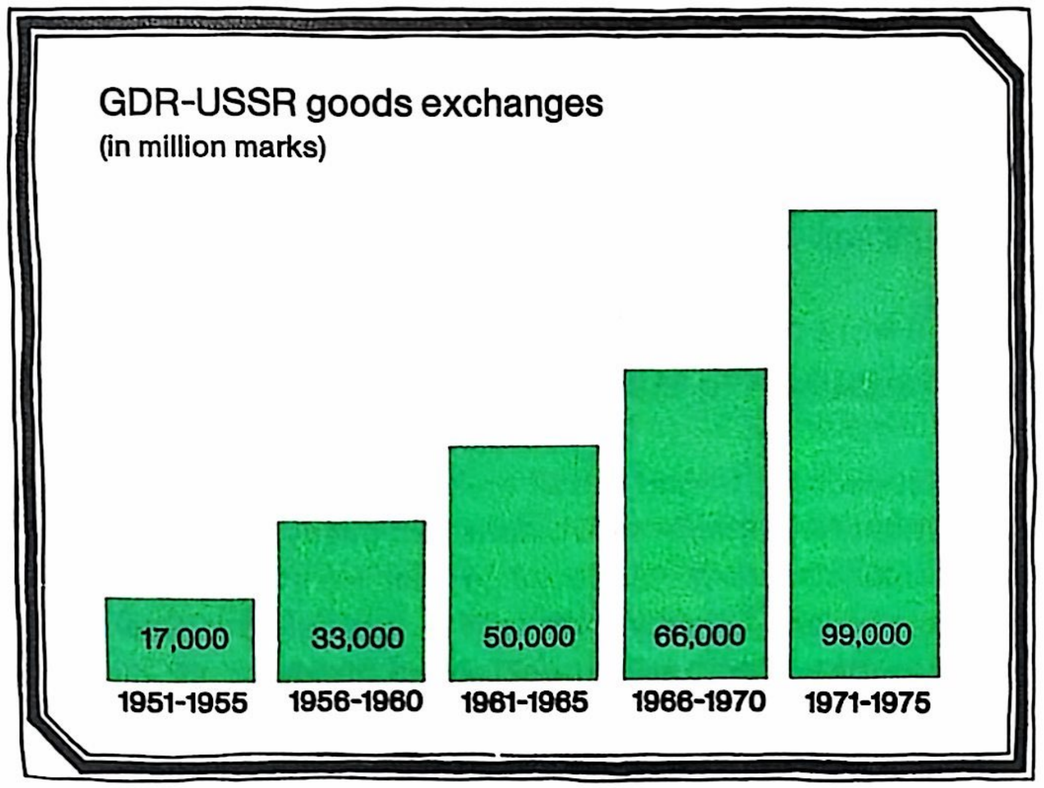
Citizens of the GDR have the feeling of belonging to a new world, of being part of a great socialist family of nations, linked by bonds of sincere friendship, which makes for a new approach to life and gives their life a profound purpose and content.

After 1945, Soviet soldiers supplied us with bread for our children, even though the war had brought hunger to their own homeland. The Soviet Union delivered 1,000 tractors for our agriculture despite the lack of machinery in the Ukraine and on the Kuban. Real friendship and the solidarity of communists really proves itself in hard times.

As things stand today, the GDR is an efficient industrialized country. Almost all our nationally-owned enterprises maintain links with factories in the Soviet Union. Over 70 per cent of our entire foreign trade is with the USSR and the other socialist countries. Where would our industry be today without the raw materials supplied by the Soviet Union, which are arranged for years ahead through contracts stipulating range, quantity and time-table for delivery. And what would we do without secure markets for our export products?

Lenin's homeland provides all the installations and equipment for our nuclear power stations and the efficient 250 and 500-megawatt turbines for our other power stations. And the Soviet Union does the same for the other socialist countries. Our nations' scientists are engaged on joint research work. Eighty per cent of all our scientific and technological discoveries and solutions are the result of joint efforts and analyses. There is no capitalist competitiveness here. We do not begrudge each other's assistance and no powerful country enriches itself at the expense of weaker ones.

The possibilities inherent in socialist economic integration



have not been exhausted yet by far. And there are still instances where things do not run as smoothly as would be desirable. Small wonder, in view of the huge task involved in interlocking the socialist countries national economies and developing them into one uniform organism. Although the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was founded more than 28 years ago, marked differences in the technological and economic levels of the individual countries were not overcome until the early 1970s, and this was a necessary precondition for the socialist countries to be able to introduce long-term, well-balanced specialization and cooperation. The time when we merely exchanged goods now belongs to the past. And so does the period in which the national plans of the socialist countries were coordinated only after each had already fixed its own one. In the meantime it has become a well-established practice to budget substantial items of the five-year plans jointly before each country makes its own plan law.

The dynamic economy and well-balanced overall social development of the community of socialist countries are proof of the fact that socialism draws nations closer together. From Ulan Bator in the Mongolian People's Republic in the Far East to Havana, the capital of the new Cuba on the American continent, socialism has established a stable bridge. It is very satisfying for people in the GDR to know that we have a firm place in this alliance and that good friends stand by our side.

We are faithful to the Helsinki Final Act

Erich Honecker pointed out at the 9th SED Congress that the revolutionary workers' movement has always aimed at freeing mankind from the scourge of war. He stated: "We shall not be outdone by anybody in the struggle for peace. To preserve peace is as vital for all of mankind as its daily bread."

In view of the present balance of power in the world and

the existence of weapons of mass destruction, the socialist countries hold that war as a political tool must be banned from people's lives once and for all. The competition between socialism and imperialism cannot be avoided. But weapons must not be used. We describe this political attitude as peaceful coexistence between states with differing social systems. The policy of peaceful coexistence has never been simply a tactic for the socialist countries. Rather, they are convinced there is no alternative to it. So we advocate that international détente be continued and also extended to the military field. The socialist countries have, therefore, done their utmost to make the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Helsinki possible. And this is also the reason why the GDR as a co-author of, and signatory to, the Final Act does everything in its power to make the process of détente irreversible.

One step in this direction was the conclusion of the Basic Relations Treaty and the Transit Agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany, which did much to normalize relations between the two German states after the government in Bonn had acknowledged the principles of peaceful coexistence in its relations with the GDR. Any speculations about an allegedly "still open German question" were thus reduced to absurdity, even though some people in the FRG have not yet reconciled themselves to the fact. An agreement between the GDR and the Senate of West Berlin making traffic-flow and visiting easier has likewise had positive results.

In this connection, we should like to mention a few figures, which will show what a cosmopolitan tourist country the GDR is. In 1976, the GDR was visited by 17.3 million foreigners, which is more than the country's overall population. The figure included 9.4 million citizens from socialist countries, the rest came from capitalist countries and from West Berlin. 11.7 million GDR citizens travelled abroad, 8.9 million visiting socialist countries and just under three million various other countries and West Berlin. The number of travellers crossing the GDR in transit totalled 17 million.

Incidentally, the full text of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference was published in the GDR in an edition of several million and is accessible to all interested. In the period since the summer of 1975, 32 treaties, agreements and accords have been concluded with 15 participating states. They deal with consular questions or cooperation in economic, scientific, technological and cultural fields, questions of environmental protection, the health service, transport and traffic. Negotiations are under way on another 40 agreements. The GDR has also implemented the recommendations of the Final Act in the sphere of information. At the end of March 1977, 131 foreign correspondents, including 65 from non-socialist countries, were accredited in the GDR.

We think many measures could be introduced at a faster pace. But we are also aware of the fact that détente is not advocated everywhere in the world and that there are not a few influential opponents of the process of détente. Our aim is, therefore, step by step to implement the whole of the Final Act which, in actual fact, is a programme for a prolonged period ahead. In so doing, we will take a stand against any delays or attempts to treat parts of the document separately. The Helsinki Final Act is an organic whole and the GDR wants to see it implemented as such.

Solidarity and international understanding

We in the GDR have received solidarity and extend solidarity to others. Solidarity forms part and parcel of our official government policy and, at the same time, is a matter close to the hearts of all GDR citizens. Even the youngest members of our society sent hundreds of thousands of postcards to help free Luis Corvalán from prison. When American bombers devastated Vietnam, solidarity shipments from the GDR for this country also included toys and writing material donated by our children.

We consider it our internationalist duty to support the

struggle of all peoples for national and social liberation. Our unqualified assistance, therefore, goes out to all efforts and initiatives directed against imperialism, colonialism, fascism and racism. We want all young nation-states to gain economic independence and be able to determine their development and solve their problems independently, with the assistance of other countries.

We want our relations with the developing countries to be stable and based on full equality. Since 1955 we have helped these states to build over 500 industrial projects and thereby imparted comprehensive scientific and technological knowledge to working people in those countries.

Young people from many countries undergo skilled worker's training or attend courses of study in the GDR free of charge, including 4,500 young Vietnamese, who are at present being given a thorough technical training in nationally-owned enterprises. Our publishing houses bring out material on education and other subjects, we give medical treatment to liberation fighters, and supply medicaments, clothing and food in support of the anti-imperialist struggle. Hundreds of Chileans have found a new home in the GDR.

Anything discussed in the United Nations or other international bodies which will further the cause of solidarity, cooperation and international understanding, will be supported by the GDR in word and deed.

VI.

What are the rights of employees?

Work plays a decisive role in human life. Working people spend a great part of their life at their place of work. Therefore, their living conditions are greatly determined by the circumstances in which they earn their living. i.e., in which they work.

What are the working conditions like in a nationally-owned enterprise?

In socialist enterprises there prevails a completely new sort of climate, marked by fellowship, mutual aid and support. This is a consequence of the change in the relations of ownership.

As owners of their nationally-owned enterprises the workers, whether wage-earners or salaried staff, and the trade union representatives elected by them have a say in all questions affecting their enterprise, from social and production problems to long-term and annual plans. This right is expressly laid down in Article 42 of the GDR's socialist Constitution: "The working people shall participate, either directly or through the agency of their elected bodies, in the management of enterprises, the activities of which constitute the basis for creating and multiplying the nation's wealth."

Since, in the socialist countries, power is vested in the working class, all laws and work regulations arise from the interests and needs of workers and all other working people.

All leading officials in the state and in the economy, especially the works managers, are required to make sure that any progress in production or any move towards rationalization in an enterprise leads to an immediate improvement in working and living conditions for the working people affected and that, to this end, all measures are discussed with the staff thoroughly and well in advance.

One other remark about working hours: a five-day working week was introduced in August 1967 for all enterprises and institutions in the GDR with the sole exception of education. This also applies to the catering trade, transport services, trade etc. The working week is, in general, $43^3/_4$ hours. Shift-workers, young people and women with several children work less hours. The 40 hour working week is being gradually introduced.

Why did we need a new Labour Code?

We have already told the reader elsewhere in this brochure how the new Labour Code came into being in 1977. It is a revised version of the GDR's first Labour Code, which was put into force in 1961 and for the first time in the history of the German people embraced the rights of working people and their trade unions.

In the meantime, the GDR has made major strides ahead. Much has changed and a lot has been learned. Today workers bear a far greater share of responsibility for the protection and careful use of the public property assigned to them than 16 years ago. Whereas in 1976 fixed assets per work place in industry represented over 150,000 marks, in 1960 it was only 64,000 marks. People's sense of justice has developed further, in general, which allows for the settlement of disputes without professional judges. The trade unions have grown in importance. So it became necessary to lay down in detail which enterprise matters require the consent of the trade union branch committee before they can be put into force.

Last but not least, the social achievements attained in the

past few years had to be recorded in the laws. These achievements also include apparently minor things, for instance, that working people doing further education courses must not have their wages reduced, that men are granted a day off per month if they run a one-parent household and have to care for children under 16 years of age, that in the event of any delays or hold-ups in the work process workers have to be paid their average earnings, that scientific and technological progress has to be more consistently used for the further improvement of health protection and industrial safety and that measures taken to rationalize production must have no negative effects on working people, with older workers, women and young people enjoying particular protection.

The 305 articles of the code combine being extremely comprehensive with being written in a way everybody can clearly understand. We call the new Labour Code our Magna Carta of Labour, because it enables us to reconcile the interests of society with those of the individual ever more fully.

What is a trade union branch committee?

Elsewhere in this booklet we presented the reader with some details about the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions. We stated that its activities are not limited to the economic sector alone, although that is necessarily the most important sphere of trade union representation.

In all enterprises and combines of socialist industry, in state farms, institutions and authorities there are trade union branch committees (BGL) elected by the staff whose interests they represent. They have the right to take part in all management meetings and discussions. They have the right to cooperate in determining pay and working conditions and have a voice in the distribution of the funds for wages, bonuses and fringe benefits.

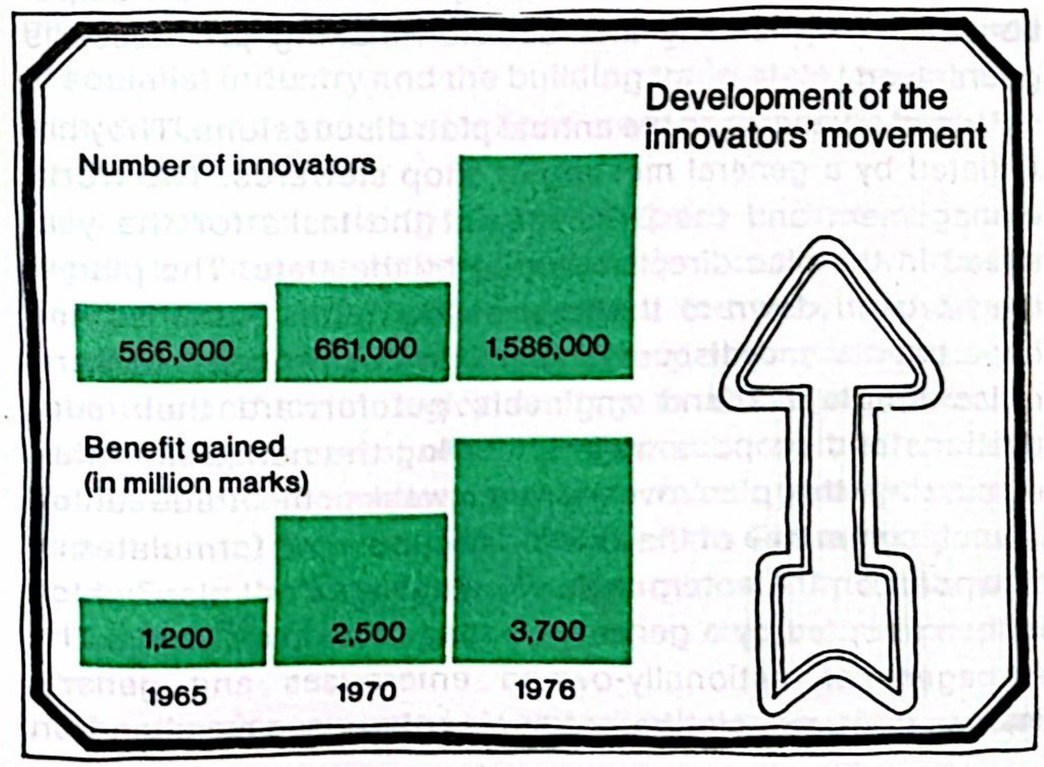
Works managers are required, for their part, to cooperate with the trade unions, to give them information and to render account to the trade union bodies about their activities. They

are obliged to accept proposals and criticisms, to take them into account or set out the reasons for their rejection. In the event of works managers or executives failing to fulfil their duties correctly, violating socialist laws or disregarding trade union rights, branch committees have the right to demand of senior managers that those responsible be called to account.

Women make up 43 per cent and young people nine per cent of the roughly 500,300 elected members of trade union committees. About one-third of all BGL secretaries are women. Two-thirds of all members of trade union branch committees and sub-branch committees (AGL) are not affiliated to any political party.

However, the role of the trade unions in an enterprise goes well beyond the activities of the BGL and AGL:

- 277,875 shop stewards represent the interests of their work-mates on the shop floor.
- 260,564 officials are in charge of national insurance, which is administered by the trade unions in the GDR, and perform all tasks connected with it.



- 241,356 industrial safety representatives are endowed with far-reaching rights to check on the observance of legal provisions for safety at work and health protection.
- 89,600 elected worker-controllers keep a watchful eye on the rational utilization of public property, see that enterprise plans are kept to, investigate abuses and secure the necessary measures for the improvement of industrial safety.
- An important job is also being done by the 260,560 cultural and 208,610 sport organizers, by the 80,968 members of women's committees and the 40,597 members of youth committees.

Taken all in all, one in four of the 8.3 million trade union members holds some representative function, thus practising their democratic right to share in decision-making.

What influence can workers exert over planning and production?

The previous section has already conveyed some notion of this. Let us mention three main ways in which the participation of all in planning and decision-making processes is guaranteed.

First of all, there are the annual **plan discussions.** They are initiated by a general meeting of shop stewards. The works management and the BGL set out the tasks for the year ahead in the plan directive issued by the state. The plan is then broken down to the level of individual branches and departments and discussed there. In this process workers, office employees and engineers put forward their suggestions and propose ways of solving the new tasks. After discussing the plan over several weeks, the trade union branch committee of the enterprise concerned formulates its viewpoint on the enterprise's or combine's draft plan, which is then adopted by a general meeting of shop stewards. The managers of nationally-owned enterprises and general managers of associations of such enterprises may hand on

their plan proposal to the superordinate economic body only if it is accompanied by this statement from the competent trade union body.

The right of industrial workers and office employees to participate in planning and managing production also finds its expression in the **collective agreement** concluded between the works management and the trade union branch committee each year after relevant preparation among the staff. It lists both parties' obligations for plan fulfilment, technological development, vocational training and further training, safety at work and health protection, expansion of social and cultural facilities, bonuses and conditions for the socialist emulation drive to step up production. The works management is required to account to the staff at regular intervals for the fulfilment of the agreement.

Last but not least, the 10,625 **permanent production councils** are also important bodies. In 1976 they involved 117,000 expert and enterprising production workers, technicians and engineers, economists and scientists. They are bodies elected by trade union members and operate under the direction of trade union branch and sub-branch committees. The chairman of such a council is a member of the BGL or AGL. Permanent production councils exist in all major enterprises of socialist industry and the building trade, state farms, trade, transport and communications undertakings and research institutes.

All problems arising in an enterprise or institution are regularly discussed there, especially those on which depend the fulfilment of plan targets, the growth of labour productivity, the increase in efficiency, the rapid transfer of scientific and technological findings to industrial application and the improvement of working conditions. It is here that the ideas and suggestions of staff members from the various departments, their worries and criticisms find a ready audience. Every worker is thus given an opportunity to take part in running the factory and organizing the production process.

The decisions adopted by a production council are recom-

mendations given to the works management. The manager is required to attend production council meetings, examine all proposals submitted and report on how they have been put into practice.

It is therefore, not by chance that workers in the GDR consider it quite normal to refer to "our" factory and that whatever they say about it is preceded by the word "we". We build, we produce, and we rationalize, they say rather than "they" or "the boss".

What are Innovators?

An awareness of being not only a producer, but an owner of an enterprise releases much energy and initiative among industrial workers and office employees in nationally-owned enterprises. A new attitude towards work emerges. Work, once a necessity to earn a living, becomes a genuine need, a field for creative activity and thought in the interests of society as a whole.

Needless to say, this is a gradual process. A new, socialist attitude towards work is not adopted overnight. But the feeling of being owners of socialist enterprises is already widespread. This is borne out by the scope and the results of the socialist emulation drive for maximum efficiency. It is borne out by the existence of thousands of work-teams who have been awarded or are competing for the title of "Socialist labour team" for working, learning and living in a socialist way. And last but not least, it is borne out by the scope of the innovators' movement.

An increasing number of industrial workers, office employees, engineers and scientists have made it their business to ponder over how they can bring their enterprise, their national economy and the whole of society still further ahead by technological improvements, new developments and inventions.

In 1970, 661,000 working people acted as innovators. Six years later, their number had grown to just under 1.6 million, which is equivalent to 31 per cent of all industrial workers

and office employees. Every third working person—including every fifth women and every third young person—is an innovator. Their ideas yielded an annual benefit of roughly 3,700 million marks. The great moral and personality-promoting value of this mass movement cannot, however, be expressed in figures. "There is no easy road to success!" This proverb also holds true for the innovators. Efforts and perseverance are required in order to find the solution searched for, and innovators often give up many an hour of their leisure time, sort out technical books to consult and have discussions with their colleagues and with engineers. The 9th FDGB Congress recommended that the initiatives of innovators should more strongly be oriented towards rendering working conditions easier, safer and more pleasant. This recommendation will doubtlessly lend fresh impetus to the innovators' movement.

This creative activity of millions of workers, in which they engage over and above their normal professional duties, reflects the basic agreement of individual and social interests, which can only be found in a social system where the means of production are public property and are used for no other purpose than to augment the nation's wealth.

Staff suggestions—even minor ones that ease a particular operation—are rewarded, depending on their usefulness, with bonuses of from 30 marks up to a maximum of 30,000 marks. Inventions entitle their authors to a remuneration ranging between 75 and 200,000 marks. They will also receive a letter of acknowledgement and a certificate and may be awarded decorations, medals, prizes and honorary titles by the state

How do we use scientific and technological progress?

Man is able to arrange the productive conditions of his existence ever better, to make discoveries and get ever better command of production processes with the help of science and technology.

It goes without saying that the scientific and technological revolution raises problems—for instance, concerning the structure of the economy or labour efficiency—which it is certainly no easy job to solve. But in the socialist countries, the achievements of scientific and technological advance are organically linked with the advantages inherent in the socialist system. Public ownership of the means of production, with power vested in the working class, planned proportionate development of the national economy and the creative participation and initiative of working people ensure that structural crises and unemployment are avoided.

The economy serves as a means to an end in the GDR and scientific and technological progress is the key to raising its efficiency. The aim is not only to render work more efficient, but also easier.

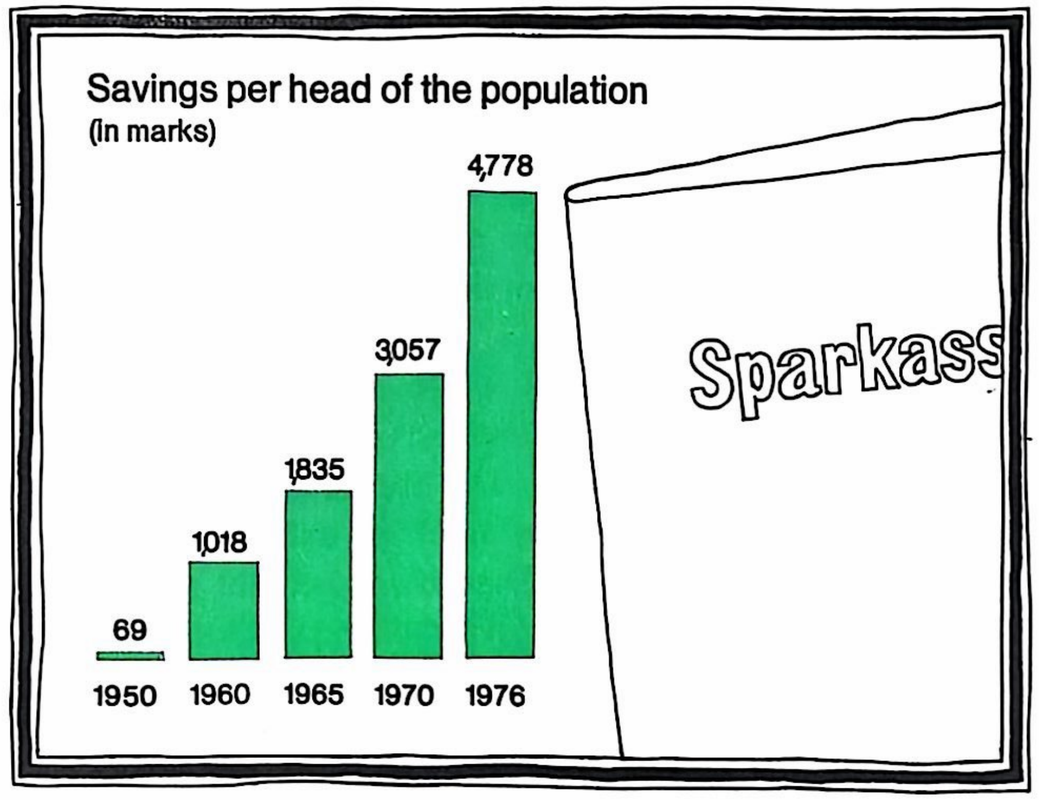
When we talk about **socialist** rationalization, we do it quite consciously and deliberately in order to indicate that rationalization measures are at no time carried out without consulting the working people, or at their expense. Workers are engaged in socialist rationalization from the very outset. They help work out a blueprint for rationalization in their factory. In the event of a job becoming superfluous, the worker concerned can prepare in good time for another one, which very often calls for a higher degree of technical knowledge. Comprehensive national economic planning for long periods ahead makes it possible for an efficient system of further training to be set up, which familiarizes workers with new rechnological methods even before they are introduced. If the same results and the same pay cannot immediately be attained in the new job, the enterprise will make up the difference so that the worker will receive his usual wages.

Socialist rationalization is invariably linked up with improvements in working and living conditions, particularly in industrial health services and safety at work. Rationalization with the people, for the people, is the central idea of socialist policy for mastering the complicated problems of scientific and technological progress.

What about safety at work?

It is a basic consideration of the socialist state and of the trade unions that every industrial injury is one too many. It means suffering for the workers and their families and material losses for society. Although statistics show a downward trend, we admit quite frankly that the number of industrial accidents is still too high, all the more so, as in the majority of cases it is not technological deficiencies that cause injuries, but insufficient orderliness, discipline and cleanliness at the place of work.

Works managers and the bodies above them—ministries and associations of nationally-owned enterprises—are responsible for health protection and safety at work. It is their duty to take account of the needs of health protection and safety at work in the planning and management of production, research and development. The labour safety inspectors of the FDGB, the bodies of the national health service and the Technical Control Service may issue instructions that are binding on works managers.



The law provides that production plants, installations and equipment must be designed, arranged and maintained in such a way that they guarantee maximum security and greatly reduce heavy physical work and health-hazards.

Every works manager is required to discuss the sickness and accident figures regularly with the trade union branch committees and the head of the industrial health service and to lay down measures to eliminate the causes of diseases and injuries. The BGL and trade union executives may call for penalties to be imposed on works managers and officials who fail to fulfil their obligations.

Stringent legal provisions, the large sums spent by the state, the activity of many voluntary helpers and, above all, the new working conditions existing in socialist enterprises have helped further to reduce the number of industrial injuries despite a steady growth of production in the GDR.

Notifiable industrial injuries per 1,000 employees

1962	1964	1966	1968	1970	1972	1974	1976
46.76	45.48	43.06	41.19	40.79	36.67	34.60	32.64

VII.

How has our agriculture developed?

The conditions necessary for agricultural production are almost the same everywhere in the world. It is dependent on the weather, because nearly all the work is carried out in the open air, because it works with living organisms and because the soil, as the chief means of production, cannot, in general, be expanded. We think we have found an agricultural structure for the GDR which, to a great extent, links up these special requirements with the possibilities inherent in socialism.

25 years of the LPGs: a successful road?

Anybody who has had the chance to get to know our agriculture will answer this question in the affirmative. It was in June 1952 that farmers in the village of Merxleben united to form an agricultural production cooperative (LPG), because they realized that tilling the soil jointly would be more beneficial for them in every respect.

The landed estates of the Junkers and of war criminals—a total of 3.3 million hectares—were expropriated without compensation after the war in what was later to become the GDR and handed to those who, previously, had cultivated them, not for their own benefit but for that of the big landowners. But the smallholdings had only a limited usefulness, as had been proved by the experience gathered in the Soviet Union. Work on family smallholdings required tremendous efforts. It hardly allowed for regular working hours or holi-

days and women farmers, in particular, very often had to work up to 16 hours a day. Moreover, efficient tractors cannot be employed on small fields.

By contrast, the agricultural production cooperative allowed for a division of labour, in which personal inclinations could be considered. Work could be carried out at a faster pace, and with greater ease and efficiency. These facts became known very swiftly and even the most conservative farmers, including many big and medium farmers, were convinced they would benefit more from joining the cooperative. So, just under 880,000 smallholdings merged to form 19,300 LPGs in the period between 1952 and 1960. Farmers could choose between three types of cooperatives with different degrees of joint utilization of the means of production and this made it easier for them to decide in favour of socialist cooperation. Nobody today would want to return to private farming.

The positive results produced through cooperative farming can be seen from the following figures. While in 1950 1.97 tonnes of grain were harvested per hectare of land, it was 3.97 tonnes in 1974, the year with the highest yields so far. In 1976, grain yields per hectare came to 3.25 tonnes despite several periods of drought. A further increase to between 4.0 and 4.1 tonnes is planned by 1980. As for slaughtering animals, there were 376,000 tonnes available in 1950 and 2.2 million tonnes in 1976, i.e., five times the amount in 1950.

This development has made it possible for the GDR to meet its needs for staple foodstuffs mainly from indigenous resources. The share of agriculture in the GDR's gross product totals 38,000 million marks. Agriculture and forestry account for 16 per cent of the national income.

Divisions between town and country are disappearing

Socialism is a society of growing social equality in which no group of the population enjoys special privileges. We hold that a highly developed socialist state is unthinkable without both modern industry **and** modern agriculture. It is only in this way that all spheres, all branches of the national economy can be developed harmoniously.

As for agriculture, the only feasible road was mapped out by V. I. Lenin in his work "On Cooperation". We are putting into practice the recommendations contained in this work and are gradually adapting working and living conditions in villages to those prevailing in towns by introducing industrial methods of agricultural production, important prerequisites being cooperative work on large farming areas and the application of scientific and technological progress throughout agriculture.

Until 1945, when villages were under the rule of the nobility and the Junkerdom, village schools were almost exclusively two-classroom affairs with a terribly low educational level. Socialism has done away with this. As things stand today, the ten-year comprehensive polytechnical school is compulsory for all children in town and country. This is necessary to bring out people's personality to the fullest extent and to enable people to master modern large-scale technology in an expert manner. Today, 82 per cent of all those employed in agriculture have a skilled worker's certificate, while in 1952 it was but seven per cent. Socialism has brought regular working hours to farmers. This means more leisure, in which everybody can follow their interests and inclinations meaningfully, as cooperatives have the funds available to build sport facilities and weekend recreation centres, houses of culture and institutions for further education.

Service centres, kindergartens and creches, the provision of warm meals in the cooperatives' canteen and at schools ease the household chores of women farmers and augment their free time. It should also be mentioned that women farmers have, in the meantime, caught up on their previous lack of educational development, which is borne out by the fact that 75.6 per cent of all women employed in agriculture in 1976 had completed some vocational training, including more than 12,300 women graduates from college or technical school and 6,800 supervisory workers.

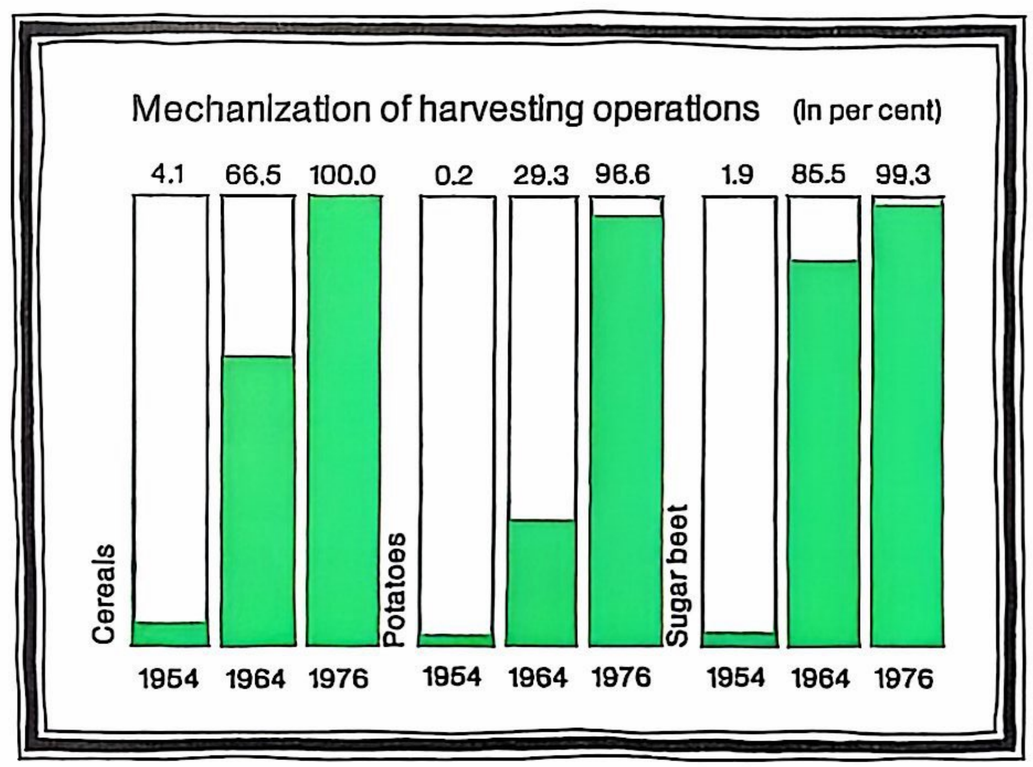
On balance, it can be stated that the traditional antithesis between town and country no longer exists in the GDR. The backwardness of the village inherited from the capitalist past has almost completely been overcome in large areas. This is why even the "flight from the land" by young people no longer represents a major problem in the GDR. In the course of time a class of cooperative farmers has gradually developed. It is the closest ally of the working class, the ruling force in this country. Harmonious, planned cooperation has developed between these two classes. This is why our Constitution describes the GDR as a "state of workers and farmers".

Farmers operate modern technology

The GDR's farming land comprises 6.3 million hectares, a mere 0.37 hectares per head of population. This area cannot be expanded. It is, in fact, further reduced by our housing programme and industrial development. What can be done to satisfy the growing need of the population for top-quality food and of industry for agricultural raw materials? We think the only way is by intensification, which means raising yields per hectare to the highest possible level. We pursue the same principle in agriculture as in industry: achieving better results and, at the same time, making working conditions easier for the farmers. Essential factors in intensification are:

- Large-scale chemicalization of agricultural production, i.e., increasing the use of mineral fertilizers, plant protectives and pest-control agents. At present 300 kilogrammes of pure nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and potash) are employed per hectare. Some 50 per cent of the planned increases in yields are to be obtained in this way.
- Large-scale mechanization of agriculture. Almost all operations are already being carried out with machines in cooperative societies. Grain and sugar beet harvesting, for instance, is fully mechanized. As for potatoes, the degree of mechanization is 96.6 per cent. Nevertheless, the number of high-performance tractors (the Soviet-produced K 700 has a 200 h.p. engine), combine harvesters (the E 512 and E 516, with a working width of seven metres, were developed in the GDR and can be operated by men and women alike), lorries, harvesters and diggers will be further increased in order to avoid, to a great extent, the losses due to weather conditions.
- Intensified soil improvement measures, i.e., continual irrigation of dry land and systematic drainage of humid fields and grassland. Much still remains to be done in this respect. At the end of 1976, 10.5 per cent of the farm land was irrigated and it will be some 20 per cent in 1980, an additional 520,000 hectares.
- The technical drying of green crops. Valuable fodder for our cattle is obtained through the processing of straw. In 1980 the amount of straw pellets produced will total some 3.3 million tonnes.

Needless to say, many a problem has still to be solved. Agrarian scientists, for instance, have not yet been success-



ful in breeding potatoes that can be harvested entirely mechanically without suffering damage and that are well suited for storing. Some operations still have to be done by hand. But on balance, we have made good headway in agriculture too. The afore-mentioned targets and tasks are not illusory. They are based on the experience gained in 25 years of cooperative work.

On the way to specialized LPGs

Our agricultural production cooperatives of the 1950s and 1960s comprised an average of roughly 800 hectares each. Compared with the individual smallholdings of the past, they were large enterprises. But they proved to be too small for more advanced technological equipment. Combine harvesters and the relevant clearing and transport equipment call for fields with an area of between 2,000 and 4,000 hectares to be employed profitably.

This is why, some years ago, various cooperatives sow, cultivate and harvest their grain fields jointly, and this aim, and the elementary process of concentration involved, necessarily led to further specialization within agricultural production. Farm enterprises specializing in crop production came into being with average sizes of between 6,000 and 7,000 hectares. The dominant feature here is the large-scale employment of up-to-date machinery, which leads to higher yields and makes work easier.

After the war, it took farmers working on their own over sixty hours to produce a tonne of grain. Independently operating LPGs needed twenty hours and today a tonne of grain is harvested in five hours. A further reduction of time seems to be quite possible. Time is money, our money, in agriculture too. Similar developments have been taking place in animal production, although concentration and specialization are effected at a much slower pace.

Cooperatives still continue to be dominant in the countryside in an advanced socialist society, although the specialized LPGs of today differ fundamentally from the LPGs that came into being in 1952 and the years following. The democratic right to have all decisions on major questions made by the general meeting and the board elected by it, within the framework of the laws, is carried on and further expanded. But, otherwise, everything has changed, has been improved, modernized and gained in maturity. Farmers are still men of the soil, although in the near future they hardly be distinguishable from working people in industry.

We must, of course, pay attention to the interlocking of agriculture with other branches of the national economy, which necessarily takes place. This process will gradually lead to the formation of effective agrarian-industrial complexes which, in a single technological chain, will produce, process and sell agricultural produce.

In this way, the road for our agriculture has been mapped out for the next few decades. Agricultural crises are unknown to us. The work of farmers enjoys the respect of society. They can continue to follow their trade, because they are ruined neither by declining producer prices nor by exorbitant rates of interest. Neither will the forms of ownership be changed in the countryside. The greater part of the land, except for land owned by the church and private plots, belongs to the farmers and is used cooperatively. The land is inheritable and can be sold, as long as it was not bought with money from the land reform fund. Speculation and misuse of the soil are ruled out because the state has the right to pre-emption. The Constitution of the GDR guarantees farmers' personal property of their houses and land.

Health services and care for retired people

Eliminating the antithesis between town and country also means overcoming existing differences in the field of social welfare. As things stand today, there are over 400 rural outpatient departments equipped with all the necessary

apparatus for diagnoses, analyses and therapy, and 5,150 visiting nurses' stations. In addition, specialist doctors have regular surgery hours even in the remotest areas. In most cases, specialized treatment is given on the spot so that the rural population need not go to the next town.

Members of agricultural production cooperatives and of crafts cooperatives as well as self-employed people, are subject to compulsory insurance with the State Insurance Company. Those employed in cooperative farms pay contributions equivalent to 10 per cent of their earnings, with 7,200 marks per year as the upper limit of income subject to contributions. Members of crafts cooperatives likewise pay 10 per cent, up to a monthly income of 600 marks, i.e., a maximum of 60 marks. In both cases, the cooperatives will contribute 12,5 per cent as of 1 January 1978 in accordance with the new Labour Code (as against 10 per cent formerly). This guarantees material maintenance in the event of illness and in old age.

Self-employed people—with the exception of doctors and dentists in private practice, veterinary surgeons, cultural workers and artists affiliated to the national insurance scheme for industrial workers and office employees—are bound to pay 20 per cent in contributions up to a limit of 7,200 marks a year.

All the categories mentioned here may take out voluntary supplementary insurance on the same terms as industrial workers and office employees and thus ensure for themselves higher sick pay and retirement pensions. Like all GDR citizens, farmers are legally entitled to retirement pensions. They need not retire to their reserved property or live on charity, as they had to formerly.

VIII.

Do women have equal rights?

One of the factors determining working people's living and cultural standards and their whole way of life is the status of women in the community. In almost all countries of the world, women make up roughly one half of the population. As a result of the two world wars, they even outnumber the male population in the GDR, where women account for 53.5 per cent.

A matter for society as a whole

In the GDR the principle of full equality for women has been fixed by law for over 25 years and has been implemented to a far-reaching extent. Erich Honecker stated in his welcoming address to the World Congress for International Women's Year which was held in Berlin in October 1975: "Equality of men and women is one of the greatest achievements of our state. Respect for women, and the flowering of their skills and talents is a basic concern of the whole of society."

Indeed, much has already been achieved. But a lot has still to be done to enable women **everywhere** in the GDR to make full use of their equal rights. Our social welfare programme has, therefore, further improved material conditions in order to advance equality of rights in everyday life.

Today it is a matter of course for women to get equal pay for equal work. 168 women are members of the People's Chamber, the GDR's supreme law-making body, which is

equivalent to 34 per cent of all M.P.s. Taken all in all, there are 64,987 female deputies in the various representative bodies, i.e., again roughly one-third of the total.

Women's equal status in professional life is the basis for this strong position in political decision-making bodies. In the GDR, 86 per cent of all women of working age are gainfully employed today, while in 1955 it was no more than 58 per cent. Women make up half of the country's labour force.

If asked why they go out to work, married women in the GDR will mostly reply that, of course, one reason is to add to their family's income and to be financially independent. But the chief reason is that they consider it more interesting and more satisfying to create something of their own, rather than to remain confined to the kitchen and the household. In a factory or office, they will gain new impressions and gather fresh experience every day. They have a feeling of security among their work-mates. They feel that they are needed and they also gain more self-respect. What is more, their own development, the new way of looking at the world around them has an effect on their children, who receive more mental stimuli from their mothers and take more pride in them.

These experiences stimulate and encourage others, and they receive support from the GDR's official policies. The 9th SED Congress stressed the need gradually to eliminate the many household tasks and everyday chores which require a lot of strength and time of working mothers.

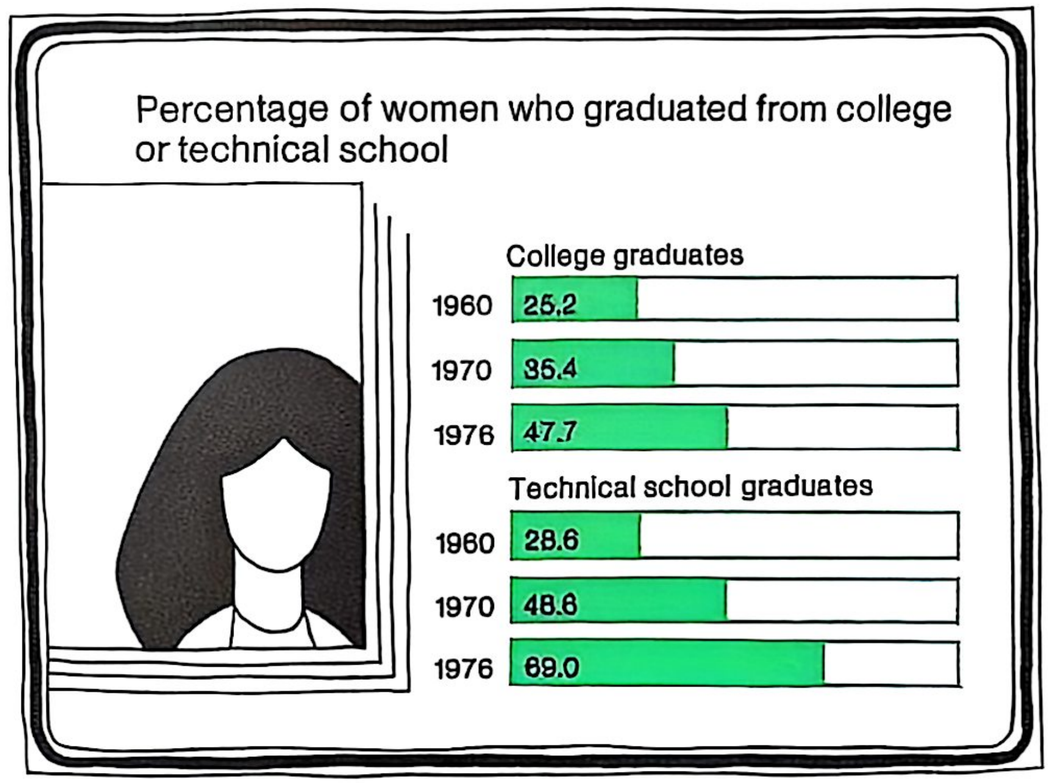
What are women's opportunities for education and promotion?

In the GDR all occupations are open to women, even those once reserved for men. They are not restricted to badly renumerated "women's occupations" or unskilled jobs. 46 per cent of all female industrial workers and office employees hold a skilled worker's certificate. Women already make up one third of university or technical school graduates in the labour force.

Women and girls work as senior architects in large cities, as managers of large nationally-owned textile plants, as control platform operators in rolling mills, as diesel engine drivers on the state railways, as transport coordinators or civil engineers. They serve as judges, public prosecutors, mayors or even county council chairmen presiding over regions inhabited by more than a million people, as in Cottbus county.

In terms of figures: women supply one-third of all judges, one-quarter of school headmasters and one-fifth of all mayors. In socialist agriculture, the scene is much the same. Women account for almost one-third of all members of LPG boards.

This effective equality has become possible because all barriers hampering women and girls in their career and denying them equal opportunities have been systematically removed. Prejudices have been gradually broken down, equal access to education provided, favourable working conditions established and machines often adapted to the physical requirements of women.



The Labour Code requires works managements to support working women so that they can undertake further training successfully, without preventing them carrying out their duties as mothers. All further training schemes set up by the trade unions check on their fulfilment.

A government decree issued in 1973 regulates vocational training in general and also includes measures making it easier for women to receive training as skilled workers. Women aged 35 and over are, for instance, exempted from written examinations when they have worked in the respective trade for at least three years. Women over 40 years of age can be awarded a skilled worker's certificate, provided they have worked in a skilled trade for at least ten years, have attended adult education classes and shown a good attitude towards work.

Another decree contains precise stipulations concerning release from work for the duration of the training course, the provision of a tutor, moral and economic recognition for outstanding results, as well as measures designed to ensure that women can complete their training after interruptions due to illness, pregnancy or family matters and difficulties.

Special opportunities are provided by women's classes attached to colleges and technical schools. These train working women to qualify as engineers, economists and technologists. Students get two days off a week to pursue their study courses, while receiving their full average pay.

This means that on principle, every women can achieve promotion in her professional career. But there is no overlooking the fact that, in individual cases, this path is often strewn with difficulties and sacrifices. Therefore, expansion of the service sector is made a priority, catering and shopping facilities in enterprises are improved, the number of places in kindergartens and creches is further increased, and husbands are encouraged by all public organizations to relieve their wives of an ever greater part of their domestic duties.

How are mother and child cared for?

It is a primary concern of the socialist state to make sure that women have the best possible circumstances for bringing up their children in good health and without financial worries, irrespective of whether they are married or not.

The first principle is that every child should be a wanted child. Only children they want to have will enjoy their love and grow up in a harmonious family. In line with this idea the law provides in the GDR that "contraceptives prescribed by the doctor to women covered by national insurance shall be free of charge". And if, nevertheless, an unwanted pregnancy occurs, women in the GDR are free to decide up to the twelfth week whether or not they want to have it terminated. All the treatment, both before and after the operation, is provided at no cost by specialists in national health service clinics.

The second principle is that, because we welcome every newcomer to this world, we do all we can to ensure that no woman has to renounce the happiness of motherhood for financial reasons or has to choose between this happiness and satisfaction in her work. The two things should be perfectly compatible.

A sum of 1,000 marks is granted for each child born to enable parents to meet the obligations involved. Payment of this sum, which is effected by instalments, is linked with regular visits to one of the country's pre-natal advice centres so that all expectant mothers are assured of continual medical supervision and care.

99 per cent of all women in the GDR have their babies in state hospitals free of charge. Maternal and infant mortality is among the lowest in the world. There are some 10,000 baby clinics to look after all children up to the age of three. Young children are vaccinated against tuberculosis, whooping cough, diphtheria, measles, tetanus, poliomyelitis and smallpox. All these services are provided free of charge.

Special attention is devoted to working mothers. Maternity leave was extended from 14 to 18 weeks in 1972 and to 26

weeks in 1976. During this period, women get sick pay equivalent to their average net earnings. Expectant mothers not only enjoy full protection against dismissal. The law also requires that workplaces be adapted to the needs of pregnant women.

As of May 1976, working mothers who have given birth to their second or any subsequent child are entitled to paid leave, in addition to maternity leave, up to the first birthday of the child, if they intend to look after their baby at home. They remain members of their enterprise staff and their job and their pension rights are ensured during that period.

The GDR has always given great importance to building kindergartens and creches, so that women with children can continue to work. There are 87 (kindergarten) places available for every 100 children aged between three and six years. Parents pay just 35 pfennigs a day to have their children looked after including a warm meal, fruit and milk.

The network of creches for children under three is likewise being expanded. The proportion of children attending creches now stands at 57 per cent. They receive three meals a day there and are cared for by trained educational and medical personnel. Parents are charged only 1.40 marks a day, which is less than 13 per cent of the actual cost.

Over 70 per cent of all children in forms 1 to 4 attend a free after-school centre, where they do their home-work and engage in sports and games under the supervision of trained staff.

These figures give the GDR a leading position in the world, along with the Soviet Union. The construction of children's facilities is being stepped up further, because a growing number of women want to keep on with their jobs even after the birth of several children.

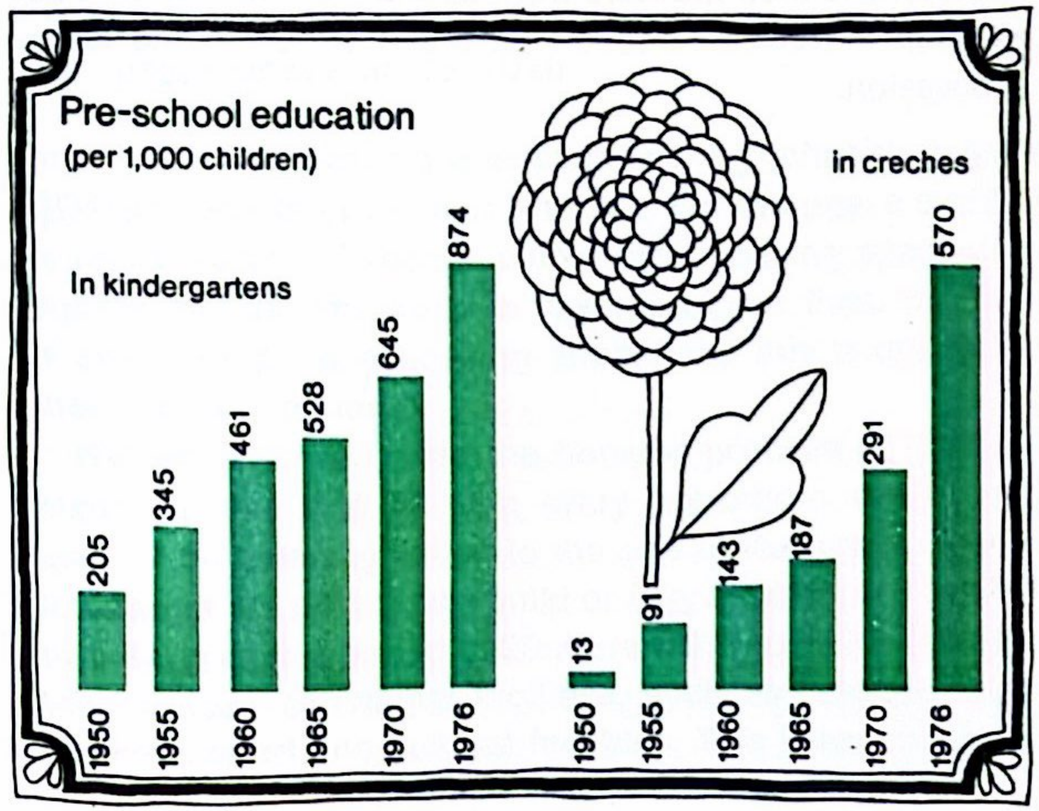
Women with two or more children under 16 years of age or women employed on shifts work shorter hours, i.e., 40 hours a week, without any reduction in pay. This is to say that they stop work 45 minutes earlier each day. Their minimum holiday leave has been raised to 21 days, or 24 days when they work shifts. For over twenty years now, all working

women with a family have been granted a paid day off each month to see to their domestic duties. As from 1 January 1977, one day off a month is granted to all women 40 years of age and over, who are in full-time employment and have a household of their own, that is twelve paid days off a year to do what they want in.

How are large families supported?

While more children bring more enjoyment to their parents, they also put a greater burden on them. The socialist state gives priority to families with many children. In this country, there are no state settlements for homeless people. Our towns are planned by socialist architects, administered by the state and developed by socialist society in such a way that children feel at home there.

The state pays a family allowance each month which, since 1969, has ranged between 20 and 70 marks, 50 marks for the third child, 60 for the fourth and 70 marks for any



subsequent ones. This means that a family with five children receives 2,640 marks in addition to their regular earnings each year, not including the tax concessions they are granted.

Enterprises and housing commissions in neighbourhoods give priority to large families in assigning new dwellings—they receive eleven per cent of all newly-built dwellings. In addition, they are given rent subsidies and are granted loans by the state if they want to build an owner-occupied home and standardized plans and building land are provided free of charge. Repayments are no higher than average rents for flats.

Families with many children are given preferential treatment in assigning holiday vouchers. The number of holiday places for large families went up from 10,800 in 1970 to roughly 63,100 in 1976. The trade union sub-committees subsidize holiday trips.

Mention should also be made of the fact that unmarried and married mothers and their children enjoy the exactly same legal status. This has been so since 1949, when all laws and provisions discriminating against children born out of wedlock and their mothers were abolished. The Family Code adopted in 1966 extended this equal status to the law of succession.

IX.

How have we set about solving the housing problem?

The German painter Heinrich Zille, who died in 1929, denounced in hundreds of his drawings the wretched living conditions in Berlin's working-class areas with their yards built round on four sides. He once said: "You can kill a human being with a (miserable) dwelling as easily as with an axe." Giving all citizens a really human life therefore means first and foremost, providing everybody with humane housing conditions.

Our programme up to 1990

At present one dwelling is available per 2.7 inhabitants in the GDR (in 1961 the ratio was 1 to 3.0). On average, a dwelling is made up of 2.7 rooms, with a total housing space of 60 square metres. The trend is towards bigger flats. But there is still considerable housing stress, and this is one of our main preoccupations.

We aim to have solved the housing problem by 1990. We mean by this that by then every household will have an up-to-date dwelling suited to the size of the family. To meet this target we will have to build or fully modernize 3.5 million dwellings over a period of 20 years (1971 to 1990), including the relevant communal facilities, such as schools, supermarkets, sport and cultural facilities. This is roughly half of

the GDR's housing stock. Some people consider this task almost impossible, considering the number of very old and war-damaged buildings and in view of the targets the GDR has set itself in other spheres of social life.

This programme is no dream for the future. It is already in full swing, as can be seen from the results obtained in the past few years. Whereas in the years between 1966 and 1970 just under 364,000 dwellings were newly built, converted or modernized, 835,000 were from 1971 to June 1977, i.e., far more than twice as many. In this way, it was possible to improve housing conditions for 2.5 million citizens in just six-and-a-half years.

Work in the construction industry will continue at this pace, thanks to the hard work and enterprise of people in all sectors of the national economy, who provide the materials necessary for the housing programme. The current Five-Year Plan (1976-1980) provides for the construction and modernization of 750,000 dwellings. And at their 9th Congress, the trade unions reaffirmed their intention to make an additional 100,000 flats available during that period by rationalization of construction work and through a more economical use of materials and time (556,000 working people are employed in the GDR's construction industry, not counted the building materials industry). It will thus be possible for another 2.2 million people to move into new dwellings during the current Five-Year Plan period.

A total of 55,000 million marks will be allocated for housing by 1980. And in the period up to 1990, 200,000 million will be set aside from the national income for this purpose. These figures show why housing is described as the core of the GDR's social welfare programme.

Visitors to the GDR are often amazed at the fact that we can plan so far ahead. This is possible in our country, because we plan social developments as a whole and because building land and the construction industry are the property of the poeple, which also makes town-planning easier. Obsolete buildings are demolished while, on the other hand, all care is taken to maintain historically valuable ones and

restore them to their original beauty. Entire centres of GDR towns are classified as historical monuments, such as those in Quedlinburg, Görlitz and Greifswald.

Who is given a dwelling?

All people will eventually be given a dwelling of their own, so that nobody will have to lodge with some one else. But so long as demand cannot be covered fully, it is a question of allocating existing old and newly-built flats equitably, i.e., giving priority to those who produce most of our national wealth, to families with many children and to young married couples who are starting out together in life. Roughly 66 per cent of all newly-built dwellings are given to workers' families. They are equipped with modern conveniences to meet growing demands. Amenities in new blocks of flats have been improved systematically in the GDR:

	1965	1970	1975
Hot water (in per cent)	73.3	98.8	99.2
Central heating (in per cent)	42.1	73.8	89.5

Housing is the responsibility of the state, i.e., nationally-owned construction firms build 45 per cent of all flats, cooperative house-building societies 40 per cent and the other 15 per cent are owner-occupied homes.

The workers' cooperative house-building societies (AWG) are sponsored by nationally-owned enterprises. They enjoy special support. The state makes available interest-free credits, without any time-limit for repayment, to meet 85 per cent of the building costs and supplies the building land free. The remaining 15 per cent is met by members, who buy shares and lend a hand with their future dwelling. In return, they get their flat sooner, i.e., between two and three years after having become a member, and at a particularly low rent. The

workers' cooperative house-building societies were founded back in 1954 at the suggestion of the trade unions. At the end of 1976 they had a membership of roughly 724,000. The AWGs own 648,700 dwellings worth a total of 14,900 million marks.

Preference in owner-occupied homes is given to the families of workers and cooperative farmers, as well as families with many children. They have great advantages, as they need not pay anything for the building land received, nor are they subject to any real estate tax. They are granted loans of as much as the entire cost of the building at extremely low interest rates. Rates of interest and repayments do not represent a burden to the families concerned, as the amount is equivalent to the monthly rent of a comparable dwelling. Families with many children are granted interest-free loans.

Are there only prefabricated houses?

A housing programme of socialist dimensions—and because of its size, the Soviet Union is carrying out a far larger one than the GDR—cannot be fulfilled with the help of traditional construction methods. Rather it calls for an efficient prefabrication and assembly industry, sufficient capacities of technical interior work, transport, design, town-planning and development.

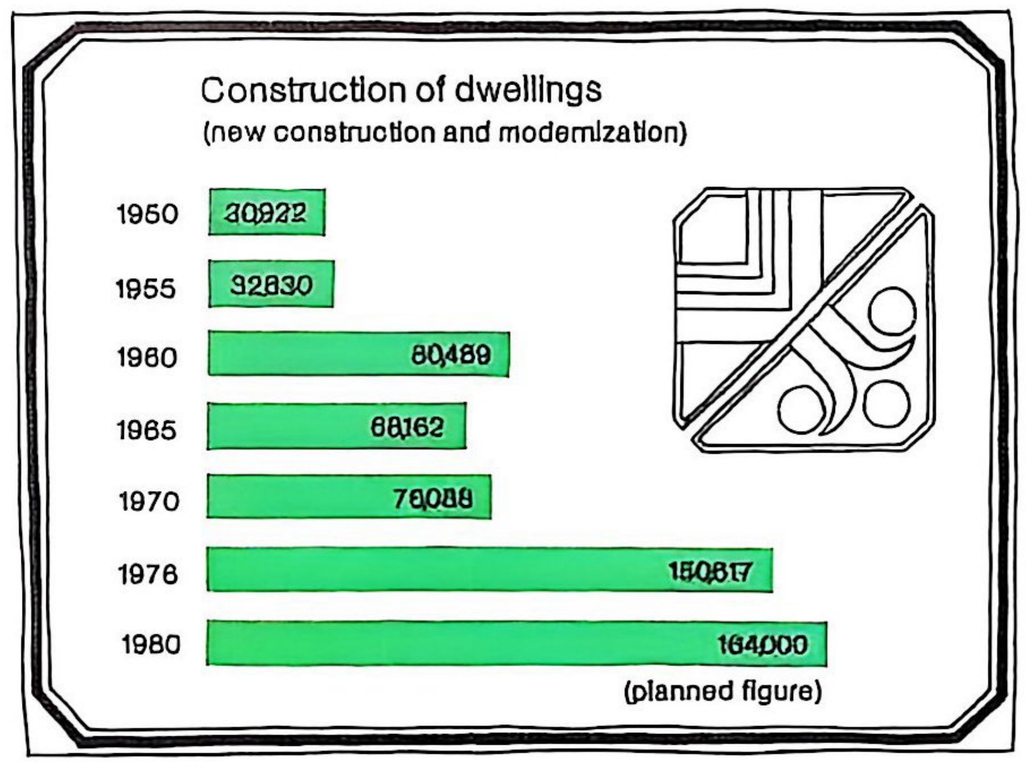
There are nationally-owned construction plants with an average staff of 5,000 employees each specializing in the production of walls with fitted windows or complete sanitary units, that is bath and toilet. They deal with some 80 per cent of the GDR's housing. In addition, there are nationally-owned construction firms at district and town level. Building craft cooperatives and private craft workshops are mainly engaged in repair work.

Scientific and technological advance gives rise to problems in this sector too, as industrial precast construction tends to lead to monotony in architecture and town-planning. We have never tolerated the creation of concrete jungles' but it is by no means an easy job to build swiftly on a large scale and, at the same time, beautifully and harmoniously. This is something which must be pushed more to the forefront. Profiting from the experience gathered by the other socialist countries, we have made great improvements. Our residential areas will be made more pleasant through a greater variety of building designs and by landscaping new buildings into their natural environments.

Green spaces, schools, kindergartens and supermarkets are already taken into account in the design stage. Norms have been fixed by the state for permissible distances between dwellings and for the requisite communal facilities.

Such norms also exist for public utilities and transport solutions.

Our principle has always been: we need no exclusive residential areas for the few. We aim to give all families an appropriate dwelling in beautiful surroundings, where they can feel at home.



Rents account for between three and five per cent of families' incomes

What a family can afford not only depends on the prices of food and consumer durables. The decisive question is what remains from a family's income after all the regular expenditure on rent, electricity, gas and heating has been deducted. These charges have to be paid twelve times a year and in other countries are a heavy burden on people's budgets.

On average, rents in the GDR are between three and five per cent of the income of an industrial worker's or office employee's family and heating roughly 1.5 per cent. Rents have remained essentially unchanged since 1949 when the GDR was founded. In older houses, they are the same as before the war. The rent charged for newly built dwellings is between 0.80 and 1.25 marks per square metre, providing the monthly gross earnings of a family do not exceed 2,000 marks. Families earning more pay higher rents but even these do not cover the actual construction and maintenance costs. Families with many children receive often very considerable rent subsidies.

An average of three marks are needed to maintain and administer a square metre of housing space. Government subsidies running into thousands of millions of marks are required to ensure rent stability and gradually to introduce social equality in all spheres of life and at all levels.

X.

How much is spent on education?

The question uppermost in the minds of many mothers and fathers is: What future will our children have? What place will they find in life? So: What is the cost of education in the GDR? What are the opportunities for apprentices? Who has access to higher education? What about further education?

Equal educational opportunities for all

Just like any other socialist country, the GDR does not know any educational privileges. Everyone has the right and the opportunity to acquire a high standard of education in accordance with his aptitudes and talents irrespective of his own or his parents' social status.

The equal rights of citizens to an education, which are guaranteed in the Constitution, are implemented through the integrated socialist education system. All stages of education—from kindergarten to university—are adapted to each other. The elementary school of the past has long ceased to exist in the GDR. Curricula are the same in town and country, so that all have equal career opportunities. Every pupil learns at least one foreign language.

As a result of our socialist school policy, 92 per cent of all children now have at least ten years schooling. Attendance at a ten-year comprehensive polytechnical school has been compulsory since 1965. The most proficient among the pupils get an additional two years education afterwards and

take their Abitur (college entrance qualification) at the end of the twelfth form. 49 per cent of all pupils doing the extra two years are children of workers and farmers.

Young people leaving school after the tenth form undertake a two to three-year course of training in an apprentice workshop or one of the 977 vocational schools. In 1977, there were just under 450,000 apprentices in the GDR.

The number of students at institutions of higher learning has increased constantly. In 1976, the overall student population at the GDR's 54 universities and colleges (in 1949 there were eight) and 233 technical schools added up to 290,000. There are 78 college students in the GDR per 10,000 population, including 48 per cent women, and 95 technical school students of whom 32 per cent are men. More than 60 per cent of those attending full-time courses are sons and daughters of industrial workers and cooperative farmers.

Free study at school and university

No tuition fees are charged in the GDR. This applies to comprehensive polytechnical schools as well as to 12-year schools. The annual cost educating each pupil at a ten-year school is 1,266 marks. Grants are paid, when needed, from the 9th form onwards.

Government allocations for the development of the education system have risen year by year. The biggest increase took place over the past six years (by 3,000 million marks).

Spending on education (in million marks)

1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1976
1,100	2,300	3,600	4,300	5,800	8,800

School lunches are supplied everywhere for 55 pfennigs a day during second break. This makes things easier for working mothers. The number of children having lunch at school went up from 700,000 to 1.9 million between 1967 and 1976. The state spent 589 million marks on this in 1976 alone.

Children may attend after-school centres free, and more than half of all pupils in forms 1 to 4 are looked after there by trained personnel who help them do their homework. To know that their children are well cared for is also important for parents out at work.

In order to give children in rural areas an education of the same standard as those in urban areas, a close-knit network of central schools, easily accessible to all, was set up many years ago. Boarding schools have been established to facilitate attendance at 12-year schools and special schools (with more emphasis on languages, music, sport and natural sciences). Students get full board and lodging there for between 42 and 48 marks a month.

Higher and specialized education, too, depends solely on proficiency with parents' income playing no role at all, even though a place at an institution of higher learning costs 9,800 marks a year. Study is free for all students. No tuition fees for seminars or practical lessons are charged.

The state pays grants to 85 per cent of the student population. The basic grant is 190 marks a month. Scholarships of up to 450 marks are awarded for the best students. Special regulations are in force for those who have already entered an occupation and are selected for university study by their employing firm. This also applies to married and unmarried female students with a child. They receive higher allowances and other support from the teaching staff.

Medical care is free for all students. They need not pay any insurance contributions. A place in a student hostel comes to 10 marks a month. New places in student hostels, dining halls, lecture, seminar and work rooms are created every year.

What has been said shows that, in a socialist society the training of children is a relatively small burden on a family's budget.

What do schools prepare pupils for?

As things stand today, roughly 2.6 million girls and boys are instructed and educated by 178,000 teachers at roughly 6,000

comprehensive polytechnical schools in the GDR. 54,000 new teachers and educationalists were taken on during the past six years. By way of comparison, back in 1946 there were 4,114 one-classroom schools, where all age groups were instructed by one teacher. 30 per cent of all schools were destroyed or damaged during the war.

Today the educational system of the GDR imparts a versatile and modern general education. It enables young people to think independently and take part in running the socialist state. Its central aim is to awaken and encourage all the talents and abilities needed for a meaningful life, a high standard of vocational training and mastery of the scientific and technological revolution.

Firstly, pupils receive instruction from specialized teachers from the first grade onwards. Children are not taught arithmetic but mathematics. For many years now there has been special emphasis on mathematics and the natural sciences. This does not imply any neglect of social sciences, languages, music, the arts and sport. All pupils learn at least one foreign language (10 per cent of them from the third form onwards). Those receiving 12-year education are singled out only in the tenth form, i.e., at a time when a pupil's special gifts are clearly discernible.

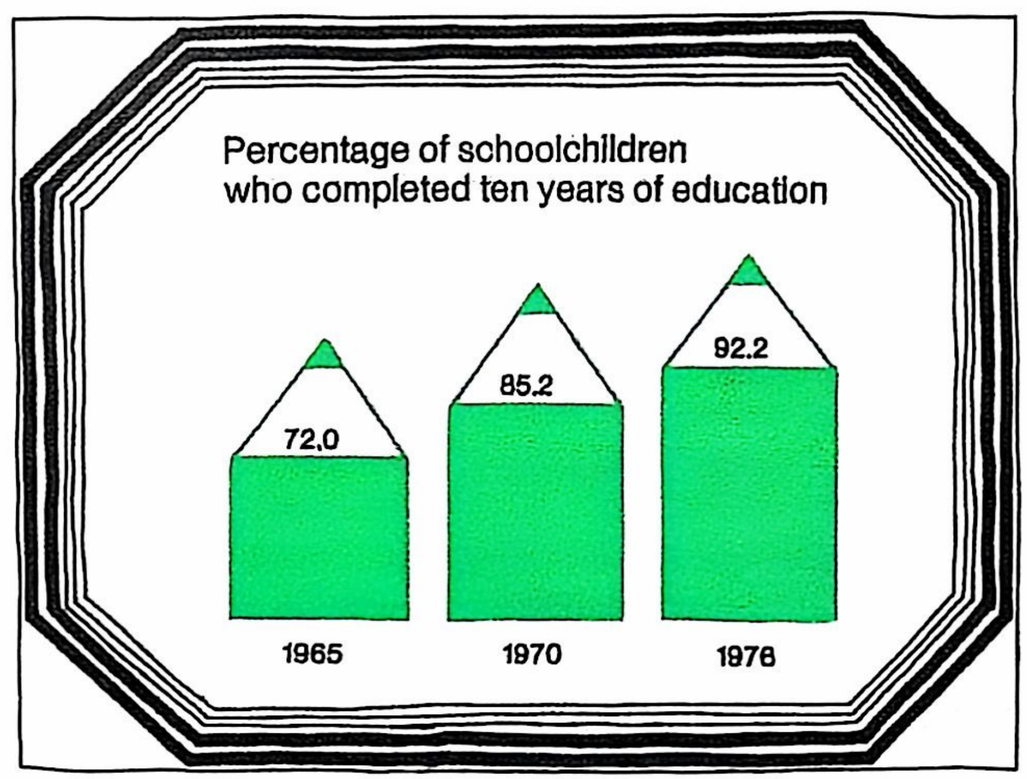
Secondly, all pupils receive polytechnical instruction to gain a basic insight into modern technology, production and economics as well as into human relations in the production process. Pupils in the lower grades acquire elementary technical knowledge and skills in industrial arts lessons.

Classes 7 to 10 have three or five hours practical instruction each week in training shops belonging to nationally-owned enterprises, agricultural production cooperatives or in special polytechnical centres. The theoretical subject "Introduction to socialist production" gives pupils a grasp of the basic aspects of socialist production. In the 11th and 12th form this polytechnical instruction is continued with practical scientific work in enterprises. This provides a good starting point for one's future career.

A factor contributing to high teaching standards is small class sizes. The average figure is 25 in ten-year schools and 21 in twelve-year schools. One full-time teacher is available for 16 pupils.

Those who have completed socialist school education are free to choose any occupation. Today, 99 per cent of all school-leavers begin vocational training or go to university or college. Under the Constitution every young person has the right and the duty to learn a trade or profession. Most boys and girls receive vocational training in large nationally-owned enterprises on the basis of modern curricula. The training is practice-related so that the future skilled workers can bring out their dexterity and talent to the full.

Factory-run vocational schools comprise training shops, classrooms and apprentice hostels. In line with present-day needs, theoretical instruction is considered very important. The ratio between practical and theoretical training is 1 to 1.5. An apprenticeship lasts between two and three years. Upon its completion trainess obtain a skilled worker's certificate in one of 28 newly created "basic trades" allowing for much specialization or in one of 306 "traditional" occupations.



It is ensured on principle in the GDR that everybody will be given a job in his sphere after completing vocational training or a study course. If apprentices so wish, their apprenticeship contracts can be made into employment contracts. College and technical school students sign preliminary employment contracts one year before the end of their courses. Unemployment is something unknown to our up-and-coming generation.

What attention is payed to the content of education?

Finally, it should be stated that parents need not worry about the content of the education imparted. It is a matter of course for a socialist school to bring children up with a sense of humanity and respect for all nations. From the very outset curricula, textbooks and teachers make sure that children are educated in the spirit of socialist internationalism, the active championing of peace, antifascist solidarity and democratic responsibility.

Apart from equal opportunities for all, our socialist education policy has the advantage that it allows people to become aware of their own role in production and in society and teaches them to understand the laws underlying social development. In this way, it helps every young person to become master of his her own destiny. It does not produce any narrow-gauged specialists. Rather, it imparts to them the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism and enables them to choose their ideals, convictions and attitudes in accordance with social progress, with the historic mission of the working class.

What about adult education?

Today's knowledge will no longer be sufficient tomorrow, because science and technology are constantly going forward. Education is gaining in importance. It is an advantage inherent in socialism that it offers all citizens the opportunity to acquire new knowledge throughout their lives, to keep up-to-date and be well prepared for the new tasks set by scientific and technological advance.

There are no dead-ends in the GDR's education system. Even after having completed general school, vocational school or study, people have a wide range of options open to them if they want to find more satisfaction in their work, assume a larger measure of responsibility or attain a higher standard of living by improving their professional skills. In the GDR adult education is controlled by the state. It does not imply high costs or any risk.

In socialist enterprises, both industry and agriculture, adult education is chiefly provided by so-called factory and village academies, which organize a wide range of courses in technical subjects. They award skilled worker's, supervisory worker's and other certificates.

In 1976 alone, 84,250 working people from industry, the building trade, transport, posts and telecommunications, among them 38,400 women, obtained a skilled worker's certificate after attending further training courses. 23,400 employees successfully passed a supervisory worker's examination, among them almost 2,600 women.

In addition, there is a vast network of evening classes. In 1976, 256,300 citizens attended courses there. Most of them wanted to obtain a certificate for 10 or 12 years schooling or take up a foreign language course.

Correspondence courses, which are organized by colleges and technical schools and are considered the equivalent of full-time courses, have been wide-spread in the GDR for many years. Enterprises grant their employees time off for study and seminars, while at the same time giving them full pay. In many cases they meet all the costs incurred.

To sum up, we could say that the far-reaching opportunities for education offered by the socialist state and the enormous sums of money invested are an essential component of working people's high standard of living.

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XI.

Who has access to art and culture?

It is often said that man does not live by bread alone. And indeed, for people to live a truly decent life they must have every opportunity to assimilate the cultural and intellectual treasures of their own people and those of all other nations in the world. How do things stand in the GDR in this respect?

Art for the people

Let us first give an example: More than 32.5 million went to museums in the course of just one year. Every GDR citizen—from schoolchildren to retired people—visited a picture gallery, a natural history museum or an art collection almost twice in 1976. The number of visitors has doubled over the 1965 figure. A remarkable increase. What is the reason behind this interest in culture and art? The reason is that socialism has created the conditions for all to lead an intellectually rewarding life in which culture is given its due place.

Firstly, the fact that socialism has freed the working people from exploitation, from the need to fight for their livelihood and from the burden of economic insecurity means that they no longer have to confine themselves to eking out a living. Economic security provides a good climate for cultural pursuits. (And a workers' state builds houses of culture and educational institutions and guarantees low admission fees.)

Secondly, the working class, which runs the state and economy, acquires knowledge and improves its technical skills, also develops new needs. Many already want more than just their daily bread, a washing machine, a car and a refrigerator. They see culture as a source of enlightenment, intellectual enrichment and strength.

Thirdly, socialist realism in art is capable of satisfying these demands. Its best works are noted for their clear message and wide appeal, which does not mean they are shallow or narrow in outlook. Socialist realism is varied in its forms and encourages originality. The great humanist ideal of art for the people is thus becoming reality under socialism. Socialism is more than economic security and high living standards. It implies a high level of education and culture, the development of everyone's intellectual potential and the full realization of people's personality.

At present, one citizen in three is a regular reader at a public library. Clubs and houses of culture attract 35 million visitors each year. The number of theatre-goers is just under 12 million. The playgoing public has remained much the same over the past ten years although twice as many people have television and the TV network have doubled their broadcasting time during this period. Theatre companies and orchestras in the GDR are not dissolved for lack of money. 3.1 million people attended concerts in 1976. Cinemas had an audience of roughly 80 million.

Culture on the shop floor

Under socialism, factories are not only centres of production, and workers are not merely producers. Culture is firmly established in nationally-owned enterprises, not only as concerns working conditions and interhuman relations are concerned, but also in the activities of enterprises, work-teams and the trade unions and in their plans and agreements where art and culture feature prominently. The enjoyment of art and cultural activities are part of the socialist emulation drive to step up production in enterprises.

Nowadays, high production results and initiatives for plan fulfilment are not the only thing that counts. Account is also taken of what team members do in terms of public work, how they improve their knowledge and develop their cultural interests. Economic performance and cultural activities are increasingly regarded as two sides of the same coin. For instance, 90 per cent of all collectives competing for the state title "Socialist Labour Team" have drawn up cultural and educational plans. They maintain close links with theatres, orchestras, writers, painters, sculptors and composers through friendship treaties, agreements and annual contracts.

Concerts are given in the countryside every winter. In 1976, their number totalled 500, with an audience of roughly 150,000 cooperative farmers, men and women. School and youth concerts which are held at regular intervals are likewise gaining in popularity.

Who may engage in cultural pursuits?

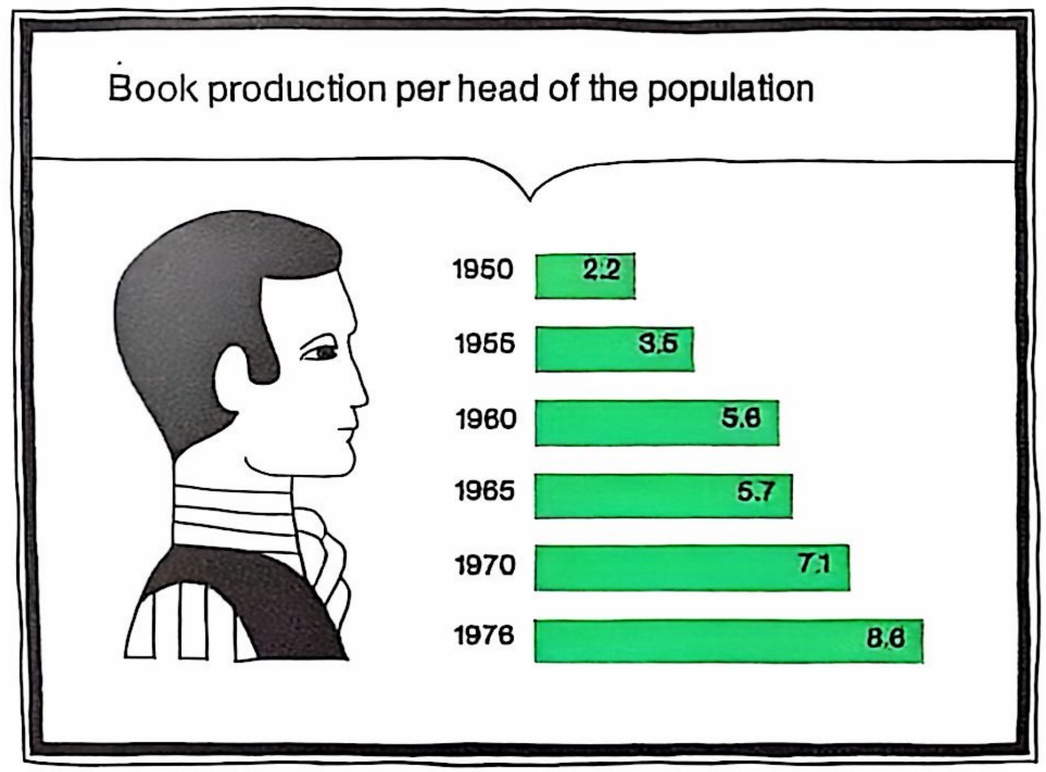
Everyone may do so. As a matter of fact, the socialist state goes to great lengths to arouse the interest of as many people as possible in such activities. It is now quite common for members of all occupations to engage in cultural pursuits after working hours.

Hundreds of thousands of industrial workers and office employees, cooperative farmers, engineers and scientists are active in amateur groups run by some 1,000 clubs and houses of culture, as well as many factory clubs where they receive expert guidance from artists and specialists. All large nationally-owned enterprises organize festivals and cultural contests each year. In 1976, a total of 2,900 such festivals took place with 7.8 million participants. They help prepare the most talented for the GDR Workers' Festivals, which are held every two years. In 1976, the Festival brought together amateur and professional artists at 900 events.

An increasing number of working people regard artistic activities as a means to make their lives richer and fuller. A competition of worker-authors held between 1974 and 1976 involved 3,200 working people, who sent in 12,000 contributions: poems, short stories, sketches, plays and reportages. The trade union publishing house "Tribüne" regularly publishes books by worker-authors.

The vast opportunities available for artistic activities are also evidenced by the existence of over 8,500 amateur art groups in factories and state institutions. They include 95 worker's and farmer's theatres, 410 amateur dramatic societies, 210 groups of worker-authors, 425 satirical groups, 1,260 visual arts amateur circles, just under 2,000 choirs and vocal groups, 290 folkart ensembles, 218 worker-symphony orchestras, 530 brass bands, 680 dance and ballet groups, 670 amateur dance orchestras, 420 factory film studios and 1,500 photography groups. The workers' and farmers' theatres put on some 2,100 performances in 1976 before an audience of more than 700,000.

Of course, there are still differences in the educational standards of workers, cooperative farmers, intellectuals and



professional people, as well as other social strata in the GDR. The effects of the past are still felt. It would be an exaggeration to say that all people seek artistic experience. But the majority of working people are developing a rich intellectual and cultural life that both affords them pleasure and stimulates their minds. Literature and art enrich people's lives in our socialist society and are one expression of their high standard of living.

What about admission fees?

Because of generous support from the state, attendance at theatre, concert and cinema performances, as well as books and gramophone records, are inexpensive and thus within the means of working-class families. A stereo LP record of classical music costs 12.10 marks.

Or let us take the theatre. "Komische Oper" in Berlin, which was guided by Walter Felsenstein for many years, is ranked among the world's leading opera companies. The "Berliner Ensemble" founded by Bertolt Brecht is also know throughout the world. But these and other outstanding stages are by no means "exclusive". The most expensive ticket comes to 12 marks in theatres and 15 marks in opera houses. Average admission fees are 3.50 marks for theatre, 5 marks for opera and operetta and 1.50 marks for performances at children's theatres, which are noted for their repertoire and artistic standards.

In 1976 there were 680 theatre attendances per 1,000 inhabitants. Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theatre managed to double the proportion of workers among its audiences. Quite a few production workers take part in regular workshop discussions and attend rehearsals. All theatre companies and many actors and singers maintain close links with work teams to familiarize them with dramatic art and to study their problems.

As for cinema shows, tickets cost between 1.20 and 2.50 marks. Children and pensioners pay half price.

How much do good books cost?

The output of books also testifies to high cultural standards. With just under nine copies produced annually per head of population, the GDR leads the world, along with the Soviet Union. 5,955 titles, with a total edition of 145.1 million copies, were produced in 1976.

Books are extremely cheap in the GDR. Valuable works of fiction are available in the price range from 2 to 12 marks. The average number of copies is quite high-about 23,000. Particularly interesting contemporary novels are quickly sold out despite the large numbers of copies produced.

The interest which people in this country take in literary creation is reflected in their taste for reading and in the wide public discussions of new works. More than 30 per cent of the population are readers in public and trade union libraries (the figure for 1965 was 21 per cent). People's interest can also be seen from the millions of copies of books published about recent history and human problems arising from socialist construction.

Warmongering, chauvinsim and racism are prohibited by law and are, therefore, not allowed to leave their mark on any publication in the GDR. Trash and bad taste are not only criticized by the public, but such inferior and demoralizing products have no chance of getting published, because our cultural policy is inspired by lofty ethical and aesthetic ideals and works of art are not commodities for profit-making.

The cultural interests of the people are clearly evident in all spheres of literature and the arts. The most recent example is the 8th GDR Art Exhibition, which was opened in Dresden on 1 October 1977 and will last until April 1978. A representative jury selected 3,000 from the total of 15,000 paintings.

The exhibition has given rise to a lively discussion among the population. Dresden is the destination of thousands upon thousands of visitors, including many work teams from industrial and agricultural enterprises and school classes. The 7th Art Exhibition in 1972 had a total of 656,000 visitors. This figure will be surpassed by the 8th Exhibition.

XII.

What is being done for people's health?

One element of primordial importance for the living standards of industrial workers and office employees is the preservation of their health and the provision of medical care and material maintenance in the event of illness.

An integrated national insurance system

In the GDR there is an integrated system of national insurance. There are no second- or third-class insured persons, no separate insurance schemes for the well-to-do and the poor, no drugs that are so expensive that a doctor will not prescribe them or only give small quantities and there are no prescription charges. People in this country have to pay not a single pfennig for checks-up, treatment or surgical operations, however complicated. Doctors, hospitals and medical institutions are open to all.

All gainfully employed people are subject to compulsory insurance. Irrespective of their social status, they and their dependants are entitled to national insurance benefits in the event of illness, incapacity to work, maternity, old age and death. Wage-earners and salaried employees (including apprentices and students) come under the trade union-sponsored national insurance system for industrial and office workers, whereas cooperative farmers and self-employed persons are covered by the GDR State Insurance Company.

The contributions to be paid by the insured have remained

unchanged since 1947. Industrial workers and office employees pay ten per cent of their monthly gross earnings to the combined sickness and retirement pension schemes with the employing firm paying 12.5 per cent as of 1 January 1978 (formerly 10 per cent). The amount of people's wages subject to contributions is limited to the first 600 marks, so that 60 marks is the maximum amount paid. Insurance coverage is also provided for other members of the family who are not working. There is no unemployment insurance in the GDR, because everybody has a job in our country.

This is to say that a skilled worker earning 1,000 marks or more pays a total of 60 marks in contributions to the national insurance and retirement pension schemes. If he is taken ill, this guarantees him 90 per cent of his net wages for six weeks. Afterwards he will receive at least 50 per cent of his net wages in sick pay. If he has children, the percentage is gradually increased to a maximum of 90 per cent.

For a number of years now, a voluntary pension scheme has been added to compulsory insurance under which working people may ensure themselves higher pensions and higher sick pay. (See chapter XIII)

As contributions by the insured have remained static, the growing demands on the national insurance scheme due to illness, incapacity and old age can only be met by ever increasing government subsidies. In 1976, they exceeded 7,900 million marks (in 1971 they were 4,600 million marks), or 42 per cent of all national insurance expenditure.

How are sick people cared for?

In the event of illness, all patients receive whatever medical care they need, regardless of their financial circumstances. The health service is organized in such a way that medical aid can be provided as near as possible to a patient's place of work or residence.

In the GDR there are 571 hospitals with 180,500 beds, or 108 beds per 10,000 population. The number of doctors has risen considerably in recent years.

Inhabitants per doctor

1949	1960	1970	1976
1,429	1,181	626	523

In 1976, as well as the hospitals, there were 534 health centres, 947 outpatient departments, 1,100 small outpatient units, 1,622 national health medical practices and 998 national health dental practices, 5,150 nursing stations, thousands of private practices, denominational nursing institutions, tumor centres etc. Another 67 health centres, outpatient departments and small outpatient units were added to the existing ones in 1976 alone.

Just under 1,000 pre-natal advice centres and 10,000 infant welfare centres look after expectant mothers and care for the health of babies. Great attention is, for instance, devoted to detecting and giving early treatment to, inborn metabolic disturbances so as to ensure normal and healthy development for the infants concerned.

Other facilities include modern centres for cardiovascular diseases combatting cardiac infarction, hypertension and vascular diseases, as well as university hospital complexes for complicated diseases. To save the lives of patients suffering from severe renal insufficiency, there are special centres where kidneys have been successfully transplanted.

Needless to say, medical treatment in all these establishments is provided free of charge and patients can choose which one to go to and which doctor they want. There are no "fashionable" doctors whose services are only within the means of the well-to-do.

What is a polyclinic?

One of the foundations of the national health service in the GDR is the network of polyclinics that have gradually been built up from the early days, drawing on past Soviet experience.

Polyclinics are health centres in which state-employed medical specialists hold consultations and which include, apart from medical and dental surgeries, a diagnostic laboratory, and X-ray department and also often a pharmacy and physiotherapy and hydrotherapy departments.

The advantage of such health centres is that several specialists may be consulted and several examinations carried out, without wasting time. Mostly, they are equipped with apparatus which it would be uneconomical for an individual doctor to operate. Moreover, surgeons and internal specialists, gynaecologists and pediatricians can all cooperate closely in giving treatment in the health centre. Preventive care can be carried out regularly.

Today, health centres are set up as an integral part of new residential areas. Their number is now almost three times as high as in 1949. As they are much frequented, our aim now is to cut down on time spent on waiting-lists and make the patient-recall system as time-saving as possible.

An increasing number of dentists are being trained to overcome the shortage still existing in this field. Their number has grown from 7,349 in 1970 to 8,108 in 1976.

It should also be noted that all diagnostic examinations, however complicated, made for prophylactic reasons are free of charge. Neither hospitals nor diagnosis centres are seen as profit-making investment projects. No-one is allowed to make a profit out of other people's poor health.

What is the industrial health service?

The industrial health service is a component part of the socialist health service and is considered one of the working-class' greatest achievements.

Health centres exist in industry, agriculture and the transport system in accordance with legal provisions. All enterprises with between 200 and 500 employees have first-aid stations staffed by a nurse. Those with up to 2,000 employees have first-aid stations staffed by a doctor and those with up to 4,000 have a small health unit. Large enterprises em-

ploying over 4,000 working people have their own industrial polyclinic. The senior doctor and the medical staff do not come under the works manager, but they help him fulfil his responsibilities for health protection and safety at work as stipulated in the Labour Code.

Factory doctors and specialists in industrial hygiene regularly carry out preventive examinations and submit proposals for changes at the work places. It is an advantage for the workers to be able to see the doctor at their factory or firm, as he knows them and their working conditions and can more easily, therefore, work out the treatment best suited to an individual case. Factory doctors not only have the right to examine patients to check their working capacity or state of health but also provide full treatment, including preventive measures.

Large enterprises and combines thereof have a rehabilitation team led by the senior physician at the industrial polyclinic and comprising representatives from the factory and the trade unions. Its task is to assign suitable work to people suffering from chronic illnesses or damage to health (involving changing their jobs, giving them easier work etc.).

Ten per cent of all working people have regular check-ups, because they are on shifts, are getting old or because their work exposes them to certain health hazards.

Altogether, 60 per cent of the GDR's population is covered by the industrial health service. Everybody—whether workers, scientists or managers—benefits from the same medical and social services. They receive the same treatment in terms of quantity and quality.

What is being done to prevent diseases?

Following the principle "prevention is better than cure", the GDR has for many years spent considerable funds on preventive medicine.

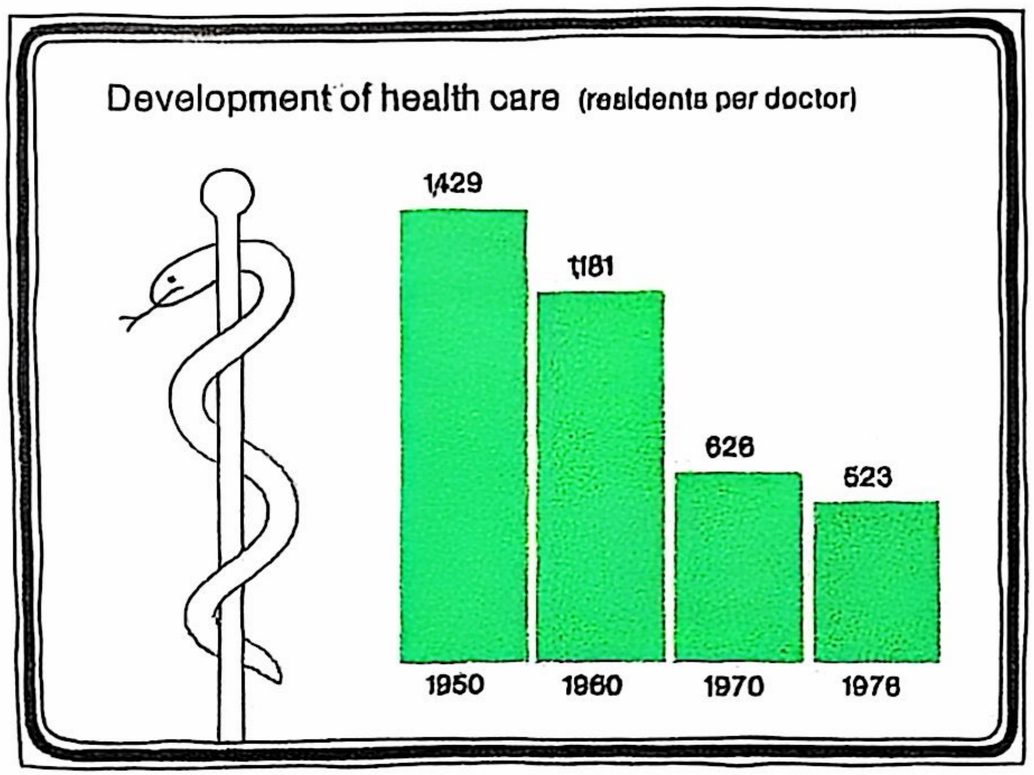
Every citizen over 12 years of age has a chest X-ray once every two years to enable early detection of tuberculosis and cancer of the bronchi.

All women may take part in regular mass screenings to detect cancer of the womb and other neoplasms at an early stage. There are also mass examinations to pinpoint cases of diabetes and to start treatment. Over five million different preventive examinations were carried out in 1976.

Compulsory vaccination schemes to prevent communicable diseases include immunization against smallpox, tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, tetanus, diphtheria, measles and whooping cough in infants. Immunization against mumps will be introduced before long.

Special importance is attached to preventive health care for children and young people in the GDR. Every school has its own doctor who is responsible for individual and mass examinations, holding consultation hours for pupils and their parents or guardians, aptitude tests for instruction in physical education, vaccinations, health education for pupils and parents, advice for teachers on matters of health and hygiene, accident prevention, sex education and sanitary inspection of school buildings.

The State Hygiene Inspectorate supervises the observance



of numerous sanitary regulations concerning the quality of drinking water, the purity of the air, the handling of food and the organization of job environments.

Preventive measures have also been introduced against caries. In many places the drinking water is fluoridated, which has proved much more effective than external application by toothpaste.

What is the cost of spa and sanatorium treatment?

If necessary, any patient may undergo free spa or sanatorium treatment within the GDR or abroad. The treatment may be prophylactic, curative or convalescent. There are special commissions in enterprises and district trade union organizations, which deal with applications after joint proposals have been made by trade union branch committees and doctors. Of the 346,000 cures prescribed in 1976 125,000 were to prevent disease.

In 1976 there were 171 spas and sanatoriums. In recent years, the number of courses of spa and sanatorium treatment has been increased as has the proportion of industrial workers (62 per cent), shift-workers (29 per cent) and women (50 per cent) going to health resorts at home and abroad. The rights of the trade union commissions concerned have been expanded.

How healthy are people in the GDR?

High sanitary and medical standards have led to a steady decline in the incidence of disease, which chiefly applies to what were once the most widespread and dangerous infectious diseases.

In 1950 there were still 50.4 new cases of tuberculosis and 7.8 deaths per 10,000 inhabitants. By 1965 this figure had dropped to 9.4 new cases and about one death, while in 1976 only 3.4 new cases were registered. Many sanatoria for tubercular cases have been re-equipped to provide other services.

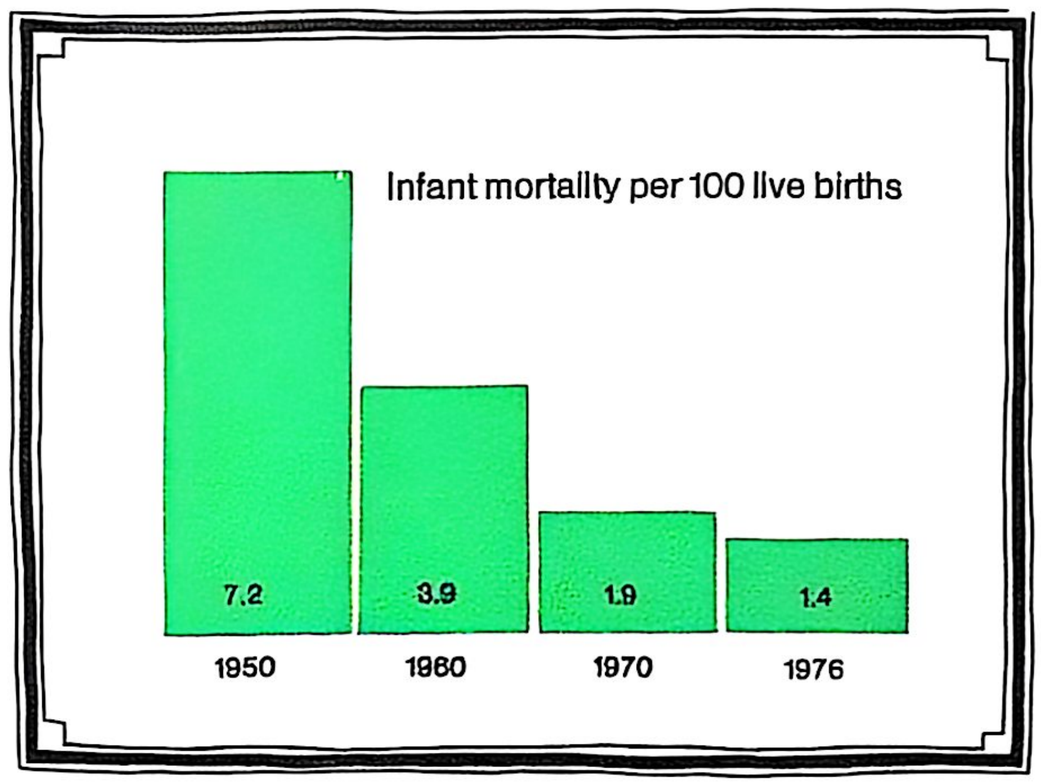
We plan to eradicate tuberculosis fully and completely by 1982, the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the tubercle bacillus by the Berlin doctor, Robert Koch.

After the establishment of 150 advice centres for rheumatic patients, the relapse rate of this disease declined from some 40 per cent to one per cent.

Formidable infectious diseases such as diphtheria, poliomyelitis or measles have virtually been stamped out (e.g. poliomyelitis since 1962) or largely contained through comprehensive preventive measures and immunization schemes.

For a number of years now, mothers have not had to fear an often fatal Rh incompatibility in their babies. Preventive examinations of all pregnant women and the use of a new serum have eliminated the risk in the Rh factor for mother and child. A wide-ranging network of immunization centres has been established.

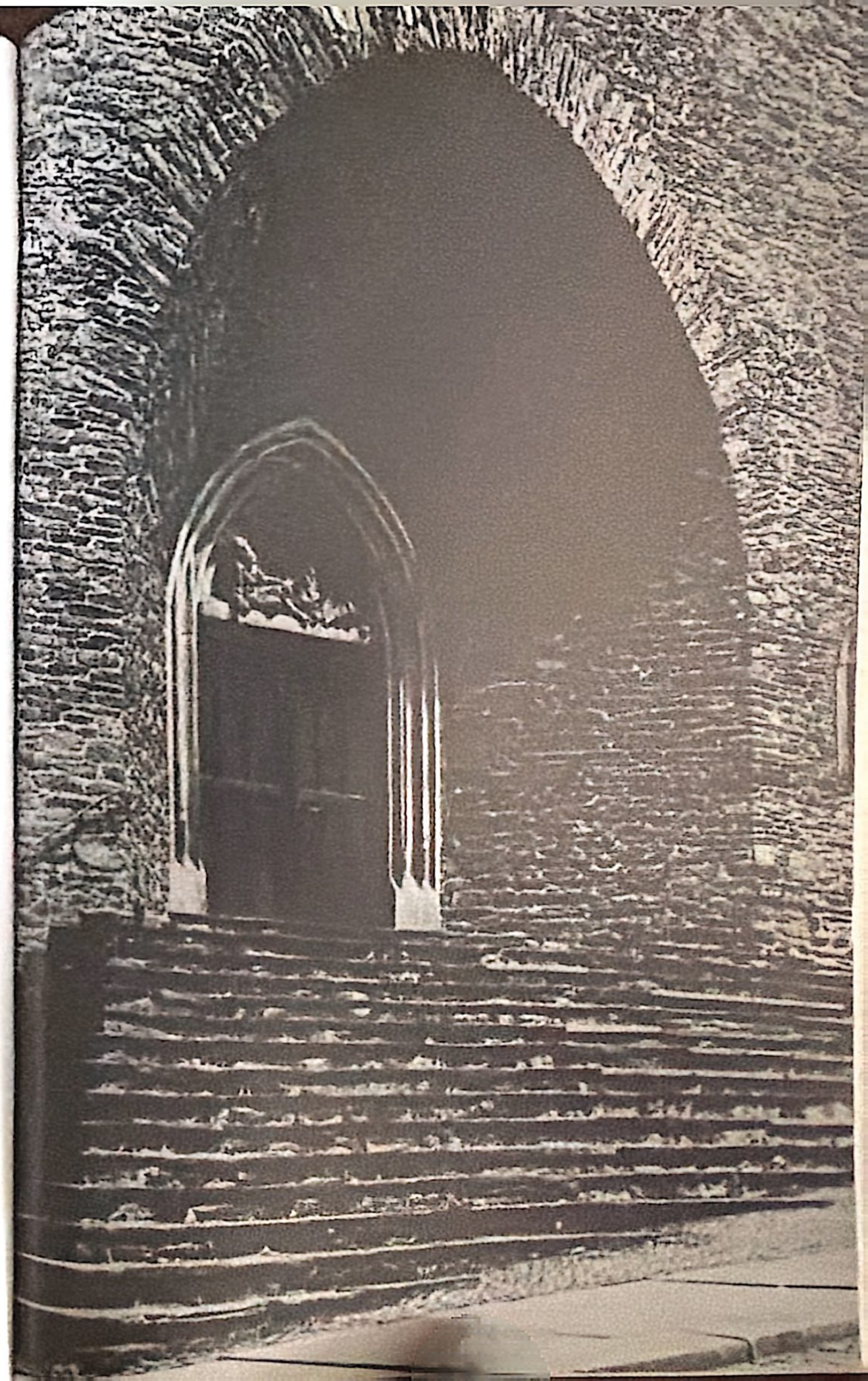
Infant mortality was reduced from 3.9 cases per 100 live births in 1960 to 1.4 in 1976. This is a result which places the GDR among the leading nations in this field.

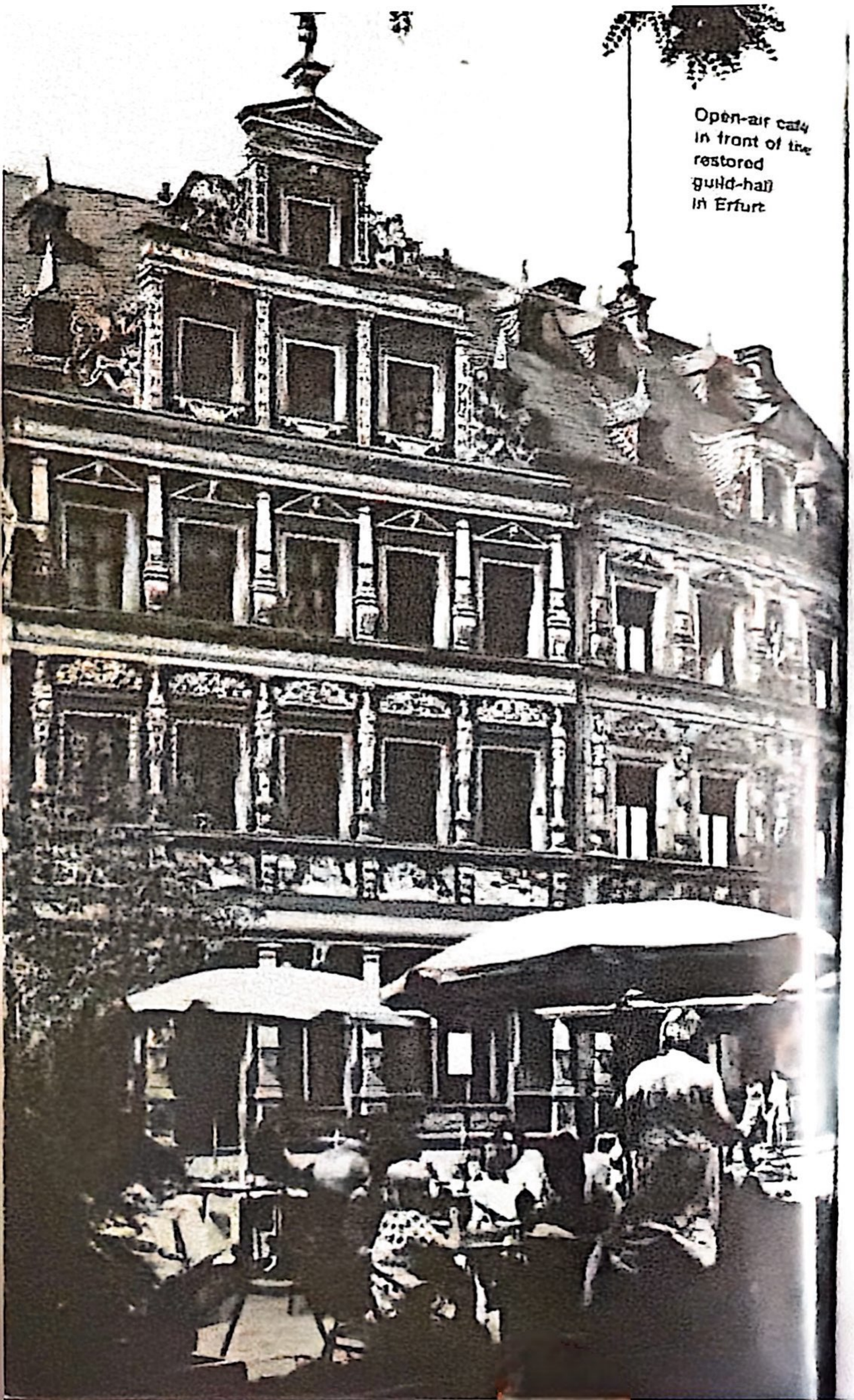


All this has positive implications for economic security and a happy family life, although many problems remain, notably the reduction of cardio-vascular diseases and the struggle against cancer. The socialist state is concentrating much of its efforts and resources on these.

National budget spending on the health and social services (in million marks)

1950	1960	1970	1976
1,394	4,240	5,877	7,937





Open-air cafe in front of the restored guild-hall in Erfurt

XIII.

What happens when you get old?

People live longer these days. Life expectancy is tending to rise. In the GDR, it is 74 years for women and 69 for men. This is six and five years respectively more than in 1952. The table below shows that the proportion of senior citizens in the overall population has increased constantly

Age structure of the GDR's population (in per cent)

	1950	1960	1970	1976
People of working age	64	61	58	59
Children under 15 years	22	21	23	21
Retired people	14	18	19	20

When people grow old their well-being largely depends on whether they have interesting activities to engage in or can pursue a job they have come to like. And when they retire, they want to enjoy the society's respect for their many years of service. They want to spend the autumn of their lives in peace and security And if possible, they want to do something useful.

How does the state care for its senior citizens?

As socialists we feel that every person, irrespective of his age, should have the right to do some useful work. No-one is

sacked because he has passed a certain age limit and no-one has his pay cut because he is getting old. Whoever is unable to work full time any longer should be given tasks in a job suiting his state of health, abilities and inclinations as far as possible. The GDR's new Labour Code gives working people who are within five years of retiring special protection against dismissal.

Some retired people in the GDR continue in their jobs at their own request. As we have no unemployment here, it is possible for everybody to find a job suiting his inclinations or to continue in his old place of work.

Here we have confirmation of the findings of modern gerontology, according to which participation in socially productive work tends to have a positive, retardatory influence on the ageing process. On the other hand, the community has the advantage that the experience of senior citizens can be further turned to account. Needless to say, retired people who continue to work also enjoy the advantage of being able to considerably increase their earnings. They are granted their full retirement pension in addition to their wages or salaries.

Since 1972 disabled, pensioners have been allowed to earn up to 400 marks—the current minimum pay fixed by the state—without their disablement pension being reduced. They may not be paid less, regardless of whether they work as doorkeepers, errand-boys or home-workers.

What about pensions?

In the GDR it has not been easy to raise pension as we would have liked. As a result of the fascist war, there are 32 retired people per 100 inhabitants of working age in this country. This explains why, in the past, pensions could only be increased gradually as labour productivity and the national income grew.

However, the socialist state has guaranteed three things from the very beginning: firstly, a uniform and comprehensive pension scheme based on an integrated national insurance system. Secondly, a guaranteed minimum pension for every working person. Thirdly, low and stable prices for all vital necessities, also in the interests of pensioners.

Women of 60 and over and men of 65 and over are entitled to a retirement pension paid under the national insurance system, if they have pursued a job liable to insurance for 15 years. Pensions are calculated on the basis of a person's length of service and the average gross earnings subject to contributions during the last 20 years of employment. A flat rate of 110 marks is added in each case.

For women special regulations are in force, under which every child born is considered the equivalent of one year's insurance. Women who have given birth to five or more children are entitled to a pension even if they cannot produce proof of a sufficiently long period of employment.

Also, women with an employment record of more than 20 years are granted an extra one to five years depending on the length of their service. Hence, their pensions are not lower those of men with the same pay even though they can retire five years earlier.

Comprehensive increases in pensions

The biggest-ever pension increases were those put into effect on 1 September 1972 and 1 December 1976. They had been jointly decided by the SED Central Committee, the FDGB National Executive and the GDR's Council of Ministers. Pensions and social welfare benefits went up on these occasions for 3.9 and 3.4 million citizens respectively—in 1972 by an average of 45 marks and in 1976 again by 40 marks. This means that almost all pensioners had tangible pension increases within a short span of four years.

Special consideration was given to retired people whose pensions were particularly low, because of their low pay during the capitalist era. The guaranteed minimum pension was increased, depending on the length of service. It gives each retired couple a minimum monthly income of between 460 and 600 marks provided that both are entitled to a

pension (until 31 August 1972 it was between 320 and 340 marks). The average monthly incomes of retirement pensioners were 360 marks in December 1976, as against 258.70 marks in 1971.

There were also increases in minimum pensions for widows (by 45 per cent) and also in marriage allowances, pensions for orphans and children who have lost one parent, as well as in minimum pensions for war-disabled persons.

All these increases were made without increasing prices, rents or insurance contributions.

What has the voluntary supplementary insurance scheme to offer?

If anyone wants to ensure themselves a higher pension, they may do so. The supplementary insurance scheme introduced on a voluntary basis in 1971 has solved a number of problems arising from the fact that on the one hand, the upper limit subject to contributions is fixed at 600 marks a month and, on the other, earnings of many working people are very high. A gulf had thus emerged between people's growing incomes and the maximum amount of pensions and sick pay. The voluntary insurance scheme balances this out more.

Working people taking out a voluntary insurance are entitled to

- supplementary retirement and disablement pensions, depending on the duration of insurance coverage and their monthly gross income over 600 marks;
- supplementary benefits for widows and orphans;
- higher sick pay (as already mentioned in the section on the health service).

The voluntary pension scheme is financed

- out of employees' contributions, i.e., ten per cent of their monthly income over 600 marks;
- by the employing firms which pay the same amount;
- by the state, which guarantees payment of these benefits, irrespective of the contributions made.

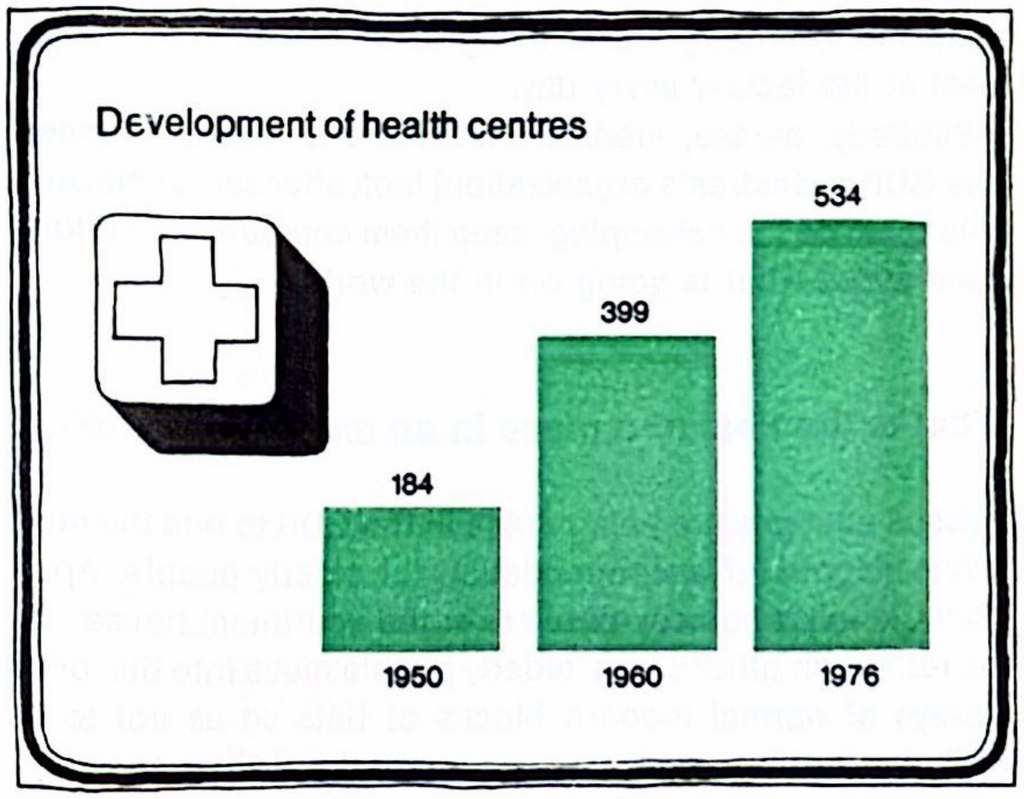
This shows that combined compulsory and voluntary insurance makes it possible for working people in the GDR to secure up to 90 per cent of their net earnings as a retirement and disablement pension, while paying no more than ten per cent in contributions to the sickness and pension insurance scheme.

As a result of all these stipulations and benefits, pensions in the GDR have increased over the past few years and will increase further in the years to come.

The number of subscribers to the voluntary supplementary pension insurance scheme rose from some 750,000 in 1971 to 2.4 million in 1976—the number of those entitled to join the scheme being 3.5 million.

Who looks after senior citizens?

Material maintenance in old age is, however, but one side of the coin. Elderly people have many other problems to face. Loneliness and helplessness may blight the autumn of their



lives. What is being done by socialist society in this respect?

We do not claim that everything is already perfect, but much is already being done. Senior citizens in our society feel secure, well looked after and respected by others.

In the GDR it is especially the Volksolidarität (people's solidarity) organization that takes care of the aged. It organizes neighbourhood aid and cultural events and distributes warm meals for pensioners in need of care. More than 420 clubs and 12,440 local centres run by the Volkssolidarität are open to senior citizens. In 1976, 193,700 political and cultural performances were held specifically for pensioners. Social and cultural activities are largely financed by the 1.8 million members of the Volkssolidarität. They are organized and directed by 137,400 voluntary helpers.

In many enterprises there are special trade union committees to look after former members of their staff in conjunction with the Volkssolidarität. Retired workers are invited to social gatherings, meetings and other occasions. At times, they may be asked to give their advice on some questions. They take part in the holiday trips, they are visited during illness and on special birthdays (70th, 80th etc.) Many pensioners, notably those living alone, have their midday meal in the factory every day.

Similarly, nurses, medical students and Young Pioneers (the GDR's children's organization) look after senior citizens, help them do their shopping, keep them company and inform them about what is going on in the world.

What is the cost of a place in an old folk's home?

Various attempts are being made in the GDR to find the most suitable forms of accommodation for elderly people. Apart from old folk's homes, there are entire apartment houses for the retired. In other cases, elderly people move into the lower storeys of normal modern blocks of flats so as not to be limited to contact with only other people of their age.

66 homes for the aged and nursing homes, with just under 11,000 places, have been built since 1971. They have standardized designs adapted to the needs of the elderly and contain comfortable one- and two-bed rooms to accommodate 280 persons, who are divided up according to whether they are fit or in need of nursing. To build such a home costs 14 million marks.

Homes for the aged are mostly operated by the state. Old age pensioners are charged 105 marks a month in these new homes, and 90 marks in old ones which includes full board and lodging. A place in a nursing home comes to 135 or 105 marks respectively.

XIV.

How do families spend their holidays?

Another question one might ask about the standard of living is: What opportunities are there for an average industrial worker's or office employee's family with children to spend their holidays cheaply in some picturesque area, in wooded regions, at the seaside or in the mountains? What is being done by the state and the community to provide such facilities?

Statistics show that more than 50 per cent of all citizens spend their holidays away from home. The number of holiday trips available is growing at a rate of between 4 and 7 per cent a year. The number of people spending their vacations on the Baltic went up from one million in 1960 to 2.5 million in 1976.

Trade union holiday service

The main reason behind this is that, like in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in the socialist community, the bulk of all holiday homes are owned by the trade unions. The Confederation of Free German Trade Unions has been operating its own holiday service since 1947. Over and above this, there are many holiday homes and bungalow colonies run by nationally-owned enterprises and production cooperatives. Exclusive health resorts for the well-to-do are something unknown in this country.

Many trade union homes have been established in former palaces and villas. Others have been constructed since the GDR was founded, including many modern holiday villages.

Private individuals also provide accommodation for holiday-makers under agreements signed with the trade unions.

The fact that the holiday homes are owned by the trade unions and nationally-owned enterprises makes holiday trips very cheap. Prices are staggered according to income, season and comfort. Trade union members are charged between 62.50 and 170 marks (Interhotels) for a 13-day stay with full board. For children accompanying their parents the rate for 13 days with full board is uniformly fixed at 30 marks. This means that a family with two children pays between 200 and 400 marks for a two-week holiday. This is just 43 per cent of the actual cost. Every holiday place is subsidized by 34 marks from the national budget and 93 marks from the trade unions. They also receive a 33-per-cent reduction in rail fares for the trip.

In 1976, the trade unions' holiday service arranged over 1,524,000 such trips. Another 1.5 million working people a year can take advantage of their firm's holiday homes and bungalows on similar terms. The number of holidays offered will rise to at least 3.5 million by 1980.

Workers have priority

After the 8th SED Congress (1971) the Council of Ministers and the trade unions agreed to expand the trade union holiday service still further. Existing homes and hotels are gradually being modernized and their board and lodging facilities improved. Ten new large holiday complexes, 20 holiday homes and three holiday villages have been built. Modern buildings have been erected in the seaside resort of Binz on Rügen Island and in the winter health resorts of Oberwiesenthal and Oberhof. Indoor sea-water swimming pools have been opened for the winter season in Köhlungsborn, Warnemünde and Zinnowitz. These measures have

raised by 344,000 the number of places the trade union holiday service alone has to offer each year.

In 1972, 80 per cent of the GDR's three finest and biggest Interhotels were made available to the trade union holiday service. As a rule, outstanding workers and their families are chosen for a stay at one of these comfortable hotels in Oberhof, Dresden and Warnemünde in recognition for their services. In another four new hotels the FDGB has at least 50 per cent of their capacity at its disposal. A total of 450,000 working people had spent their holidays in these seven hotels by the end of 1976. Production workers and families with many children are now given ever higher preference than before in the allocation of holiday trips.

Of course, GDR citizens have other opportunities as well when they want to go on holiday. In 1976 the GDR's travel agency provided holiday places in the country's beauty spots for about 135,000 people. Weekend trips and special outings were arranged for just under 4.1 million people under the week-end recreation and leisure organization scheme.

Finally, there are 525 municipal camping sites, which were used by 1.7 million holiday-makers in 1976. Places there—which are very cheap—are allocated at central and regional level from January each year. On the Baltic coast there are not enough places in July and August, although capacity is being increased all the time. Places elsewhere, especially on the shores of lakes and in the mountains are, however, generally available at short notice.

Trips to neighbouring countries

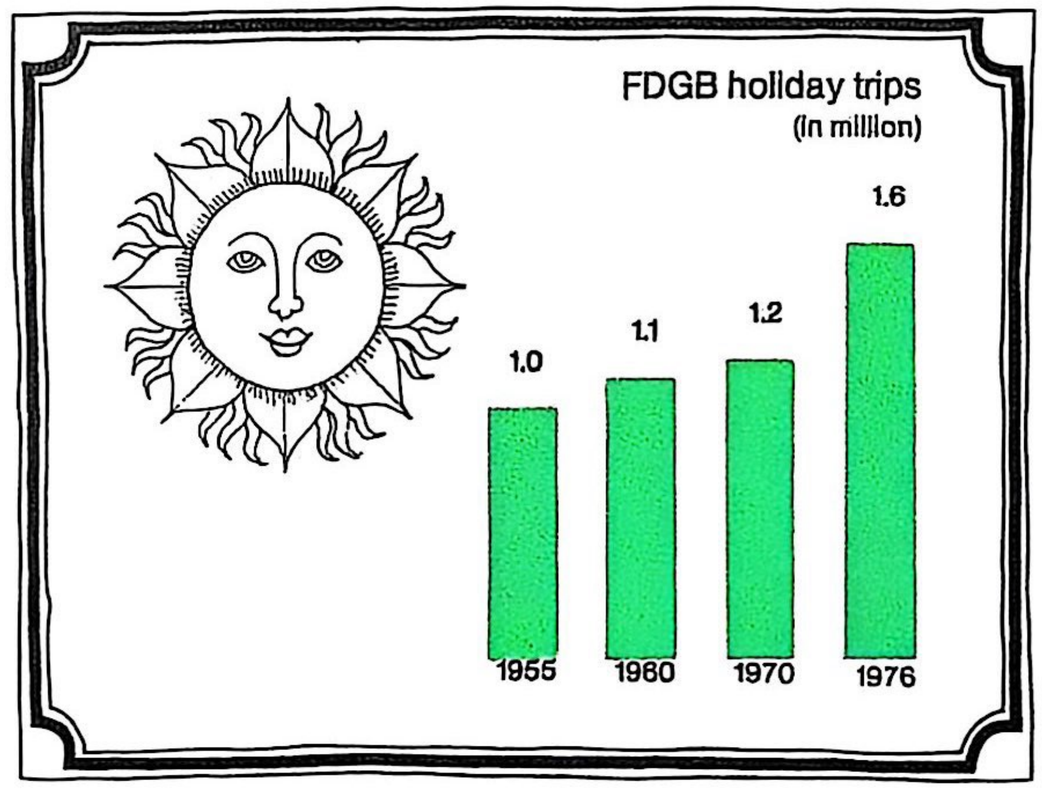
Tourist trips into neighbouring socialist countries have seen a remarkable development over the last six years, as passports and visas are no longer required. In 1976 more than 3.8 million GDR citizens visited the Polish People's Republic and 4.3 million travelled to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic—trips involving more than 1.6 million cars and motor coaches. Conversely, 8.5 million people came from Czechoslovakia and Poland to visit the German Democratic Republic.

Apart from these private trips to the neighbouring countries, the GDR's travel agency has arranged journeys to all socialist states for 25 years. The Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia are the main destinations. 18 per cent of our citizens spend their holidays abroad every year. In 1977, people could choose from a variety of 170 itineraries.

Trips abroad including a stay in first-class hotels with all modern conveniences are of course relatively expensive. Nevertheless, the number of GDR citizens travelling to the Black Sea, the Adriatic, the Tatra Mountains or the Caucasus rose from 397,000 in 1970 to over a million in 1976. Demand cannot yet be met in all cases.

It should be added that trips for young people offered by the Jugendtourist travel agency to famous resorts and cities of the socialist countries are much cheaper.

In socialist countries it is also common practice to recognize workers', cooperative farmers' and office employees' services to the community by giving them trips abroad.



Happy holidays for all children

More than 1.9 million children find recreation each year in holiday camps and homes belonging to enterprises, which are located in picturesque surroundings and are well-equipped with sports equipment, playing grounds, libraries and many other facilities. Parents are charged no more than 18 marks for a three-week stay there. The actual costs come to 250 marks but these are met by enterprises and the trade unions. This also applies to the supervisory staff. Tens of thousands of other children spend happy holidays every year with friends from roughly 30 foreign countries in Pioneer and youth camp-centres.

Those who do not go away to a holiday camp can take part in locally organized holiday activities in schools, Pioneer Houses, Pioneer Parks, open-air swimming baths and sports centres. Here again the charge is only nominal.

So parents need not have any worries about where their children stay during the two-month vacation and what they occupy themselves with. The whole of society feels responsible for this, especially works managements, the trade unions, the youth organization and teachers.

Another piece of information of interest is that the country's 257 youth hostels provided 1.2 million overnight stays in 1976. Young people, students and pupils are charged 25 pfennigs and adults 50 pfennigs per night.

XV.

Are all sports open to everybody?

Physical culture, gymnastics and sport are part and parcel of our life. They bring out to the full the beauty of the human body. They are conducive to human health, provide us with recreation in our leisure hours and have a great effect on moulding our characters.

What is the DTSB?

Physical culture and sport are indispensable components of the socialist way of life. We aim at achieving human personalities which combine intelligence, a clear mind, firm will and noble character with a good physical constitution. This goes to underline the importance of this country's all-embracing sports organization, the German Gymnastics and Sports Federation of the GDR (DTSB). It has a membership of over 2.7 million, including 726,000 children under 14 years of age, i.e. 16 per cent of the population. Affiliated to it are 8,153 sports clubs operating in all major enterprises and in residential areas.

Needless to say, not every sport is suited for everybody. This is why the DTSB offers a wide range of opportunities so that anyone can engage in his or her favourite sport at little cost. Judging from the number of regular participants, the most popular sports are soccer, gymnastics, angling, motorized sports, track and field athletics, handball and

bowling There are no exclusive clubs for the well-to-do in this country. Even riding, fencing, yachting, tennis, figure-skating, motorized sports and such like are open to all interested. Monthly membership fees are the same everywhere and are within everyone's reach: 1.30 marks for adults, 80 pfennigs for pupils and students and 20 pfennigs for children.

The boards and executive bodies of the DTSB are elected in a democratic manner. Approximately 300,000 people hold some part-time function within the DTSB and added to these there are just under 180,000 training supervisors and more than 86,000 referees, umpires and judges. Sports activities are well organized, as the German Gymnastics and Sports Federation can draw on a wealth of experience accumulated over several decades. Sports facilities, training grounds, sports homes and the necessary equipment can be used by all. Although the GDR had already nearly 18,000 different sports centres in 1976 (stadiums, sports grounds, swimming halls, ski jumps, etc.) additional ones are going to be built. 162 mini sports facilities were opened to the public, particularly in residential areas, over the last few years, which has further improved opportunities for sporting activities. In 1976 alone, the state set aside just under 250 million marks from the national budget for the creation of sports facilities.

From Spartakiad to Olympic games

In Canada and elsewhere many people were amazed to learn that the team from such a relatively small country as the GDR ranked third behind the Soviet Union and the USA in the 1976 Summer Olympic Games. In Montreal the GDR team won 90 medals and it returned home from the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich with 66 medals. GDR athletes also excel in the World and European Championships.

To be sure, in sport it is sometimes a question of good luck and victory depends on the athletes' condition on the day. Many people wonder about the secret behind these successes. But if there is a "secret" at all behind GDR sport, then it must be looked for in the way physical culture and sports are encouraged in all socialist countries, as is natural to socialism. This provides a broad basis for sporting activities during which talents are discovered and systematically developed under the guidance of experienced training supervisors.

Special legislation on children's and youth sport has been in force in the GDR since 1950. Children's and Youth Spartakiad Games have been held for ten years now, sponsored by the DTSB, education authorities, the youth federation and the "Young Pioneers" children's organization.

These games take place in several stages. First, the best athletes are singled out at school level and they then take part in eliminations at town borough, town and district level. Winners have the right to enter county Spartakiad Games and those doing well here take part in the central games in Berlin or another large town. Anyone winning a medal in their event and age group can be proud of their achievement. Some four million entries in the Olympic sports are regis-

Allocations from public funds

	million marks	marks per head of the population
1966-1970	110,000	6,500
1971- 1975	161,000	9,500
1976-1980	210,000	12,353

tered every year for the Olympic-type sports held at the Spartakiad Games. Needless to say, competing gives children and young people great pleasure.

In addition, it is customary for many people in the GDR to go in for some sport at their firm or in their residential area. Sporting activities are also organized in holiday centres, which were attended by just under 2.3 million sports fans in 1976. Roughly 369,900 adolescents took part in the campaign to find "the strongest apprentice in the GDR". Mention should likewise be made of the joint sport programme organized by the DTSB, the trade unions and the youth federation. Family contests, district sports festivals and so on are open to all.

So the reason performance levels at the top of socialist sport are so high is because there is such a broad basis at grass-roots level.

Incidentally, the GDR does not keep its "secrets" to itself. Over 1,200 training supervisors from 56 foreign countries, especially developing countries, have so far studied at the College for Physical Culture in Leipzig. DTSB officials travelled to Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Great Britain to pass on our experience in the field of swimming, track and field, skiing and figure skating.

What do world champions go on to do?

The general public considered it sensational when 17-year old Kornelia Ender won two gold swimming medals within 30 minutes at the Olympic Games in Montreal. She has in the meantime done her A-levels and started studying medicine to become a pediatrician. So she can gradually taper off her training under the supervision of sport experts, who watch over her health as carefully as before when she was in top form. Kornelia can be certain she will find her place in society and will never be written off as happens with sportsmen in many a capitalist country.

Gustav-Adolf Schur, twice world road cycling champion,

took up a course of study to become sports teacher when he gave up his career as an active sportsmen. Today he is the vice-chairman of the DTSB in Magdeburg county and has been a member of the People's Chamber, the GDR's supreme law-making body, for many years.

Helmut Recknagel, Olympic ski-jumping winner in Squaw Valley and twice world champion, studied veterinary medicine. Today he is a district hygienist and often acts as referee at international ski-jumping events.

Wolfgang Behrend, who won the first-ever Olympic medal for the GDR—a gold medal for boxing in 1956—is now a press photographer of long standing with "Neues Deutschland", the biggest daily in the GDR.

The list of names could be continued ad libidem. Anybody whose performance helped to augment our country's international prestige is now a respected citizen of the GDR, because they prove themselves in their current jobs too, because they contribute to the well-being of all people at work in our nationally-owned industry or scientific institutions, as teachers or trainers. In this way they continue to be exemplary models for young people and confirm our basic attitude that we do not need and do not want stars or super-athletes who are only able to accomplish great deeds in their sports. Our aim is a nation of educated socialists to whom physical culture and sport have become a necessity of life.

XVI.

What opportunities are there for young people?

More than 5.2 million citizens of the GDR are under 21 years of age. They make up roughly one-third of the population. Over 2.9 million, or one in six, are aged between 14 and 25.

What opportunities are there for young people in a socialist state? How do they live and what rights do they have? Are they placed at a disadvantage or do they enjoy special advancement? We mentioned a few things about this matter in the section on education and holiday activities. But much remains to be said.

What are their basic rights?

The party of the working class and the workers' and farmers' government have always been guided by the consideration that youth should enjoy confidence and be given responsibility.

The GDR has consistently put into practice the four basic rights which the First Congress of the Free German Youth (FDJ) proclaimed in Brandenburg on the Havel at Whitsun 1946 as the young generation's action programme for building a new social life: the right to engage in political activity, the right to work and recreation, the right to education and the right to joy and happiness.

As things stand today, the up-and-coming generation is an equal, attentive, responsible and critical partner in the construction of an advanced socialist society. All roads to high educational standards and creative work are open to it. Equal pay for equal work, irrespective of age, and prolonged holidays for young people were introduced on 8 February 1950. There are no educational barriers, no exploitation of apprentices and no fear of losing one's job. Everything is being done to enable each and everyone freely to develop their talents and abilities, their sense of initiative and personality for their own benefit and for the welfare of society as a whole.

This is also the main point of the new Youth Act adopted by the People's Chamber on 28 January 1974 as the third such law in the republic's history. It tends to give young people still broader responsibilities, rights and opportunities in the socialist state and contains precise stipulations binding on all executives in public and economic life.

How old must a deputy be?

As in the other socialist states, the young generation in the GDR has a real share in exercising political power and running the economy at all levels. No legislation or measures are adopted without youth and their elected representatives playing their part.

Any citizen aged 18 and over is entitled to vote at any election. At 18 they may also be elected to serve on any representative body, including the highest one—the People's Chamber of the GDR.

The voting age was already fixed at 18 in the first Constitution of the GDR promulgated 25 years ago. The socialist Constitution adopted on 6 April 1968 then reduced the age at which a person might be elected to hold office from 21 to 18 years. A step which appeared to many to be "too daring", but has, in the meantime, proved correct and reasonable. Our principle is still that anybody holding their own in vocational or professional life and in the national defence forces should have an opportunity to voice his or her opinion when questions concerning the up-and-coming generation are being decided.

Today, 42,000 young people between 18 and 30 years of age serve as elected representatives of the people. They make up 20 per cent of all deputies. Almost 30,000 of them are in the 18 to 25 age group. Sixty representatives of the younger generation have been elected as members of the People's Chamber.

What role is played by the youth organization?

The GDR has a united socialist youth federation, the Free German Youth. It unites young people from all walks of life on a voluntary basis. Representing the interests of the up-and-coming generation, it considers its task to be to reach out to all, to rally them all to its side and to leave noone behind on the road to communism.

The FDJ has a membership of 2.2 million. This is more than 62 per cent of all young people. All FDJ committees are democratically elected from the bottom upwards. The existence of a united socialist youth organization largely explains why the vital interests of youth in the GDR are represented so effectively.

The FDJ makes diverse efforts to cater for the different interests and needs of young people. It encourages them to employ their ideas and energies to create high material and cultural standards. The FDJ furthers young people's scientific and technological interests and their thirst for knowledge. It initiated the song movement, discovered young talent and encourages creative competition between them. Thus, in three decades of activity, the FDJ has become the political rostrum of young people, where not only Marxists but Christians too feel at home.

The youth organization has a group of its own in all local assemblies and in the People's Chamber, where the FDJ holds 19,366 and 40 seats respectively. So the younger generation is always well represented, irrespective of how many young candidates are nominated by the other parties and organizations on the joint list of the National Front.

Their voice is always heard

The heads of all government departments, enterprises and combines, cooperatives, schools and colleges, scientific institutes and organizations are legally bound—and have indeed made it their standard practice—to consult at regular intervals with the FDJ committees and to hear the views of the representatives of the young generation in preparing decisions. The FDJ operates its own branches everywhere and they enjoy far-reaching rights. Their representatives cooperate on managerial bodies and scientific and educational councils to represent the interests of the up-and-coming generation. At colleges and technical schools, for instance, FDJ committees have a say in admissions for study courses.

The Free German Youth has a publishing house of its own. In addition to many periodicals, magazines and books, it publishes a daily newspaper, the "Junge Welt" with a circulation of just under one million copies.

To enable young people to take part in running the country's affairs with a large measure of competence, the FDJ engages in intensive work to spread the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism. It runs a youth college and schools at regional level. Marxist education classes are organized by the FDJ each year. High political and professional standards make it possible for GDR youth to shape their lives consciously and freely in accordance with the overall interests of society.

What is a youth project?

Young people seek responsibility. They do not want to be ordered about but want to solve complicated problems on their own. This is essential for the harmonious development of their personality.

In the GDR it is customary for young people in socialist enterprises, cooperatives and institutions to be placed in

charge of entire departments, building sectors, shops or research projects with clearly defined tasks. This is what we call **youth projects.** Mostly, these are economic key projects, particularly socialist streamlining measures, calling for a high degree of knowledge and commitment. Team work adds to people's individual potential as they derive more satisfaction from both their own contribution and the joint success. Altogether, there were roughly 80,000 youth projects involving over 942,000 young people in the GDR in 1976.

In industrial and agricultural production enterprises there are also more than 28,000 **youth teams,** chiefly made up of young workers setting themselves ambitious targets. For 1977 young workers and cooperative farmers have undertaken to save materials to the value of 1,000 million marks by way of more rational work.

Finally, the **Young Innovators' exhibition** movement should be mentioned as an opportunity young people have to unfold their creative energies. The idea is to submit innovations and inventions for consideration. The best results are displayed in public at the annual Young Innovators' exhibition (MMM). There were about 600,000 boys and girls involved in this movement in 1970 and 2.2 million in 1976. Last year they came up with nearly 600,000 ways of improving production or introducing new technological methods.

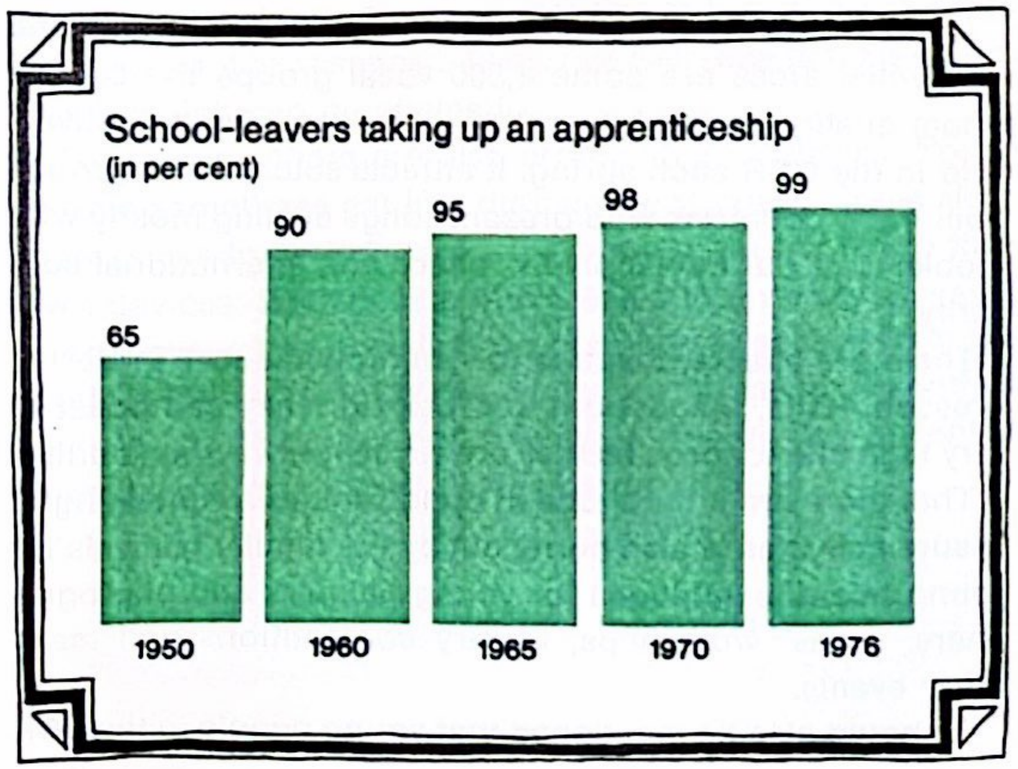
What is being done for young married couples?

Most marriages take place rather early in life. However, a good deal of money is needed to set up a home of one's own. It is not always easy to procure it, especially if one partner has not yet completed his or her training. The socialist state regards it as its task to help all married couples and families to get off to a good start. In so doing it also relieves parents of much of their burden.

Since 1972, newly wed couples in the GDR have benefited from special privileges in addition to those we have already mentioned.

Young couples marrying for the first time are granted an interest-free loan of 5,000 marks to furnish their home providing neither of the two is older than 26 and their joint monthly gross income does not exceed 1,400 marks.

They may apply for a second interest-free loan of the same amount to procure housing space, for example, by building an owner-occupied home, to add new rooms to a house or buy shares in a workers' housebuilding society. Repayment of these interest-free loans is extended over a period of eight years. A sum of 1,000 marks is remitted on the birth of the first child, another 1,500 on the birth of the second and another 2,500 marks on the birth of the third child. As we mentioned earlier, a family allowance of 1,000 marks is also granted for each child born. By mid-1977, 400,000 young married couples had applied for loans totalling roughly 2,200 million marks of which 323 million marks have so far been remitted.



Is dancing expensive?

To begin with, it must be admitted that there are not yet sufficient places to dance. At week-ends most discos and similar establishments are packed. Deputies, authorities and public organizations are making great efforts to overcome this shortcoming through local initiatives.

But it must be emphasized that in no case young people are "fleeced". Under the new Youth Act all institutions are bound to grant allowances and price reductions when dances are organized for young people. Admission fees vary from 50 pfennigs to 2.50 marks. Provisions have been made for reasonably priced meals and soft drinks to be available at dances for young people.

The number of youth clubs and discos in the GDR is continuing to rise. They are not only for dancing in. Politicians are invited to discuss current problems, artists and scientists answer questions from their young audiences and there are film shows and quizzes. At present, the number of discos is about 3,000 and youth clubs 4,300 (in 1972 there were 1,050), most of them set up on the initiative of young people and with their cooperation.

Operating in schools and universities, in enterprises and residential areas are some 4,500 vocal groups the best of whom qualify for the international "Political Song Festival" held in the GDR each spring. It attracts soloists and groups from many countries who present songs dealing mostly with problems of our development, peace and international solidarity.

There are special theatres for young audiences in Berlin, Dresden, Halle, Magdeburg and Leipzig, They can boast of very high attendances as they are virtually always sold out.

That there are a multitude of opportunities for meaningful leisure activities is also borne out by the regular festivals for young talent, exhibitions for young painters and photographers, poets' workshops, literary competitions and many other events.

It should also be mentioned that young people in the GDR

are voracious readers. In 1976 alone, 673 different well-produced and interesting books for young readers were published in 1.6 million copies and sold at very low prices. The number of readers under 14 years of age in public libraries rose from 745,000 in 1960 to 1.2 million in 1976.

Why no wide-spread drug addiction?

In the GDR drug abuse is no wide-spread phenomenon. Parents can rest secure in the knowledge that their children will not become involved with drugs. Why?

We have not allowed drug abuse to be dismissed as harmless, to be extolled as modern or to be propagated as a "way out" in a pseudo-philosophical manner. Strict regulations in force at our frontiers protect us from influences and imported items we do not want. In socialist society no one can make a living by engaging in shady transactions spelling misery for other people. There is no "underworld".

But, most important of all—as we have tried to explain elsewhere in this booklet—drug addiction as a mass phenomenon has no social basis in this country. The younger generation uses all the opportunities it has to learn, study and carry out its responsibilities. For everyone there is an aim in life which can be attained.

To be sure, there are also problems and worries. Young people sometimes get into difficulties or crises. Some allow themselves to be led astray, but people are not left to their own devices. Society as a whole helps in a variety of ways.

Anyhow, young socialists do not need to escape from this world with hashish. On the contrary, they need strength to change it. They do not exchange reality for deceptive dreams, but make their dreams come true.

XVII.

What does the future hold?

Are official government policies in harmony with my interests? Will peace by preserved? How am I going to live tomorrow? Can I hope for a secure future? The answer to these questions is important for everyone.

No question-mark hangs over people's future

For the citizens of the GDR and those of the other socialist countries the first seven years of this decade have been a success. They brought a host of social welfare measures which have improved the lives of many millions of working people. The plan targets were fulfilled in almost every respect and often even surpassed. Thanks to the initiatives by construction workers, roughly 170,000 dwellings in excess of the plan could be handed to the population for occupancy.

Every working person today in the GDR knows that this development will continue in the years ahead. Everyone knows with absolute certainty that they will live better tomorrow than today, that neither today nor in five years time will they lose their job or be put on short-time working. On the contrary. By then, their social situation will, as planned, have further improved. People are even in a position to predict to what extent this will be the case, since the Five-Year Plan Act is not kept secret from the general public.

This stability and continuity of economic and social development gives every citizen the reassuring feeling that he is secure and living in an atmosphere of human warmth. Citizens are certain that the cause of the people is being well served by the working class and its party, the SED. This is also borne out by our plans for the years to come.

Our targets for the next few years

Our current Five-Year Plan covers the period from 1976 to 1980. This notwithstanding, the State Planning Commission of the GDR is already busy working out data for further economic development, searching for the most favourable variants and discussing continued cooperation and specialization with our friends. Planning for prolonged periods ahead is an advantage inherent in socialism, which we are striving to master ever better. The positive results of enterprising and successful work during the past five-year plan period are an encouragement for us to continue with our efforts in the same manner.

We have set ourselves exacting targets by 1980. In addition, we have to compensate for the negative influences exerted by the capitalist world market. But when looking back over the past few years we are strengthened in our conviction that the targets set will be fulfilled if we employ all our strength.

Our national income, the indicator of real economic growth, rose from 108,000 million marks in 1970 to 145,000 marks in 1975, i. e., by 30.1 per cent. In 1980, it will total some 182,000 marks. Thus, from 1976 to 1980 the national income produced will come to 830,000 million marks. This is over 200,000 million marks more than in the preceding five-year period.

Industrial output rose from 172,000 in 1971 to 235,400 million marks in 1975. From overall industrial output between 1976 and 1980 is expected to reach 1,400 thousand million marks, this being 400,000 million marks up on the previous five-year plan. Agricultural production will rise by 20 per cent in the same period. As a result of increased labour productiv-

ity, industrial output per day in 1980 will be worth 1,200 million marks, as against 930 million marks in 1975.

The population's net monetary incomes were planned to rise by four per cent between 1971 and 1975. The actual growth obtained averaged 4.8 per cent. They are to increase by at least another 20 to 22 per cent by 1980. Real incomes per head of population are to grow by between 21 and 23 per cent, with consumer prices remaining stable and government allocations from public funds continuing to rise. For a family of four these allocations will come to 680 marks per month in 1980.

Elsewhere in this booklet we have already mentioned our large-scale housing construction programme, our targets for the health services, the educational system, physical culture and sport. All this is covered by our central policy which consists in further raising the people's material standards and the quality of their life. The over-riding principle followed by the socialist state is to ensure high living standards for the working people, the mass of workers' families with children, the millions of industrial and office employees, cooperative farmers, intellectuals and professional people—all those who create our national wealth.

Naturally,we are by no means satisfied yet with things as they are. Many problems remain to be solved. It is impossible to change everything overnight. We cannot distribute more than has been produced. But what has been produced is distributed equitably.

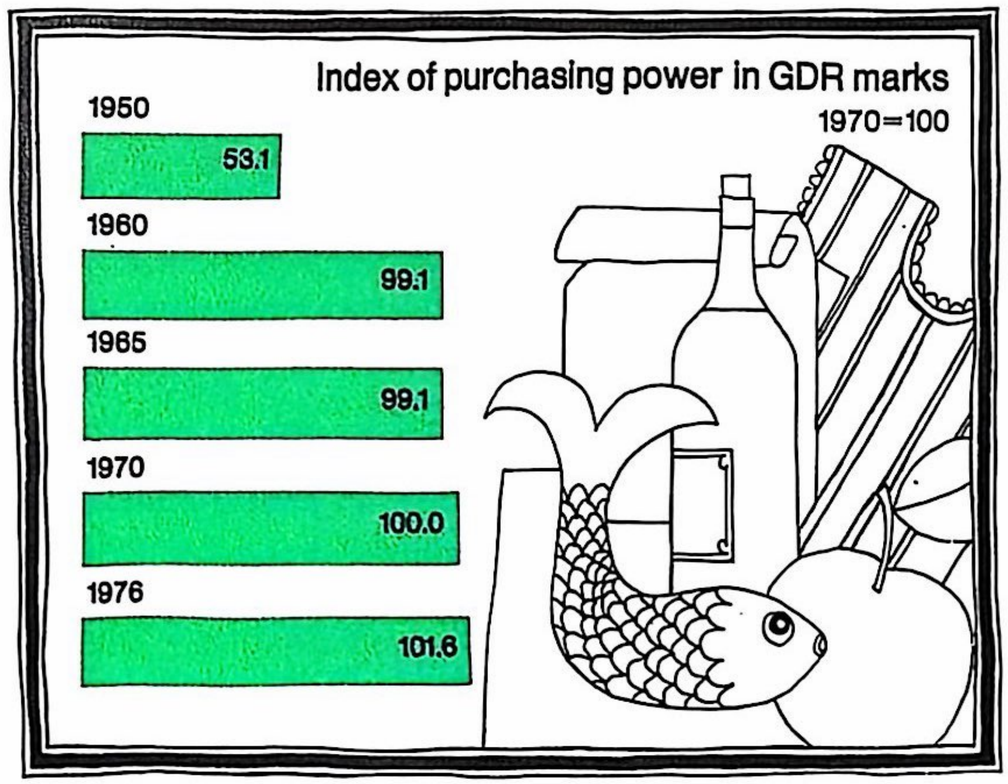
The advantages of socialism as it really exists

What we have said here about the standard of living and way of life in the GDR is equally true of all countries of the socialist community. Everywhere the party of the working class is guided by the same principles in its policies and considers its primary task to be to ensure the swift development of living and cultural standards and of new, socialist human relations.

Everywhere there are similar legal provisions and practical institutions in the field of social welfare, workers' rights, the educational system, socialist democracy, science and culture. Everywhere man and the full development of his individual values and faculties is at the centre of the activities of the Marxist-Leninist party, the workers' and farmers' state and public organizations.

Of course, the most advanced of all is the first state to establish a socialist order: the socialist Soviet Union now leads the world in many fields of the economy, science and technology and especially in social welfare policies, education and culture. Calculated on a per-capita basis, the Soviet Union has the largest number of doctors, scientists and students, the biggest output of books, the lowest statutory retirement age and the lowest taxes. For 60 years now the Soviet population has paid the lowest rents and the lowest charges for heating, hot water, electricity, gas and telephone and the lowest underground and bus fares.

All other socialist countries draw on the experience of the Soviet Union, which they apply in accordance with their



national conditions. Of course, differences in living standards subsist on historical grounds. However, they do not tend to become more blatant but are being overcome step by step. Here we have the aim underlying socialist economic integration, the ever broader cooperation of all socialist countries in planning, research, production and trade, science, education, culture and social services.

In general, the socialist states, many of which used to be backward agrarian countries, have not yet reached the most advanced of the capitalist nations in terms of production output but the socialist system has made it possible for exemplary solutions to be found to problems in key areas of life and for the basic needs of the working class and all working people to be satisfied ever better in accordance with our potential.

Share of CMEA countries (in per cent)

	1950	1976
in the world's population	11	9
in the world's surface area	17	18
in the world's industrial output	18	34

Our road into the future

Despite many a difficulty, socialism has proved for the first time in history that rapid and steady economic growth, guaranteed full employment and rising real incomes are not mutually exclusive.

Socialism means maximum economic security for all working people, an end to exploitation and to the fear of losing one's livelihood, the certainty of never being made redundant.

Socialism means permanently rising living and cultural standards based on crisis-free, planned production and advancing socialist integration.

Socialism means that workers by hand and by brain are respected at their place of work and in social life as a whole and that human dignity is respected. It means real democracy and genuine freedom.

Socialism means high educational standards for all, which are essential both for mastering the processes of the scientific and technological revolution and for taking part in a democratic and competent manner in all political decisions.

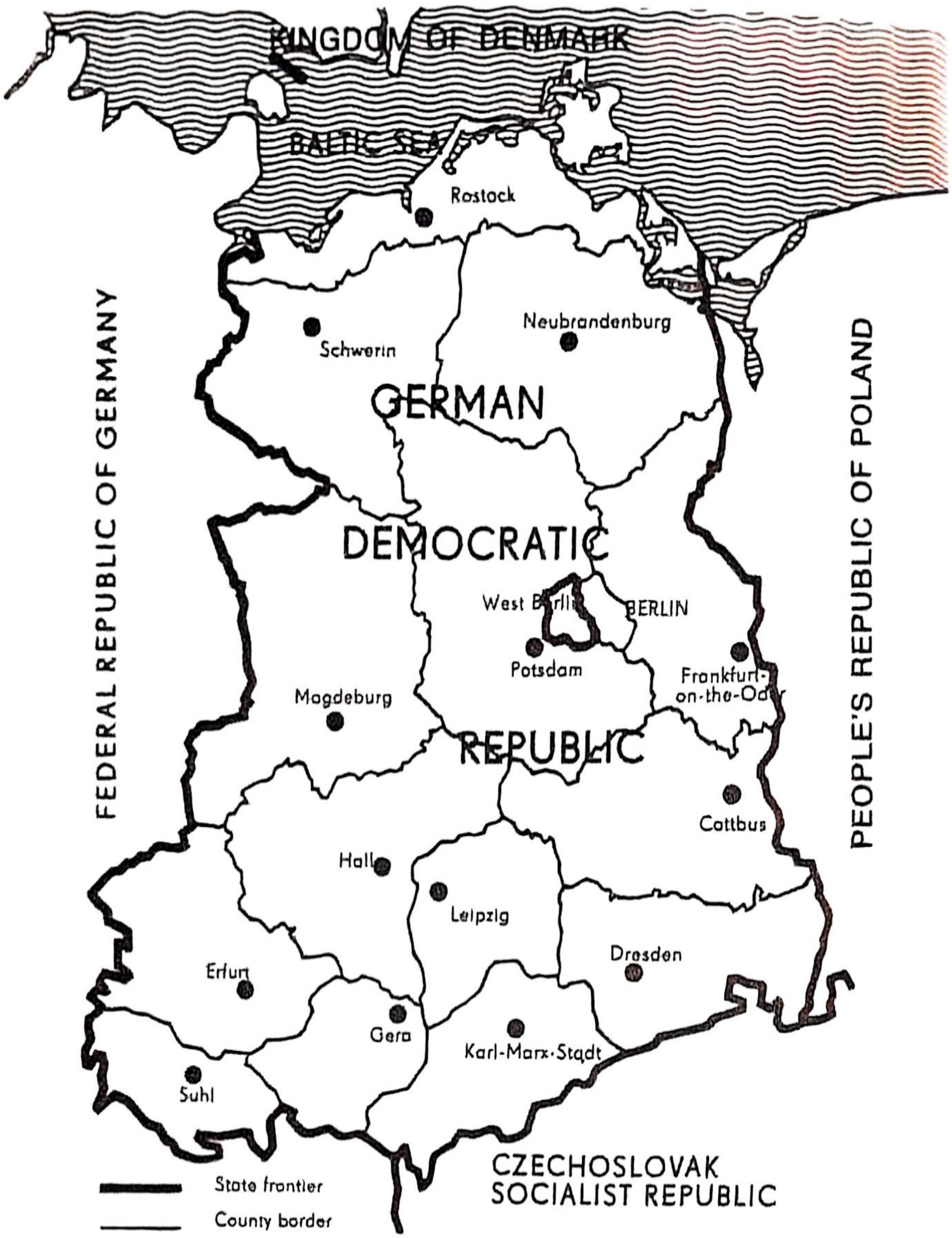
Socialism means elimination of the imperialist root causes of war and the absolute certainty that no war will be unleashed from one's own country. This means a resolute stand for détente and peaceful coexistence.

Socialism means that people can lead a happy and meaningful life, that they can plan their own future far ahead and shape it in a conscious way.

It is in this manner that the GDR fulfils the legacy of antifascist resistance fighters. The GDR is the heir of everything progressive in the history of the German people. The new SED Programme, which was adopted by the party's 9th Congress in 1976, makes it our strategical aim, i. e., our objective for the next few decades, "to forge ahead with the building of an advanced socialist society in the German Democratic Republic, thereby creating essential conditions for the gradual transition to communism". We want to build a society with creative labour and full, cultured life for each and everyone. Communism is equivalent to a world of peace, of work, freedom, equality and fraternity.

A society of this type is no Utopia, no dreamland. We are building it today through our achievements and our struggles. No wonder, therefore, that the citizens of the GDR say that their life has taken on a new sense, a new content, a new and higher quality.

Well then, what is life like in the GDR? From what has been said in this booklet, you can see life here is peaceful and safe, free and secure. The people shape their lives consciously and creatively. Whatever happens, tomorrow will be even better than today.


KINGDOM OF DENMARK
BALTIC SEA
Rostock
Schwerin
Neubrandenburg
GERMAN
DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
West Berlin
BERLIN
Potsdam
Frankfurt-on-the-Oder
Magdeburg
Cottbus
Halle
Leipzig
Dresden
Erfurt
Gera
Karl-Marx-Stadt
Suhl
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF POLAND
CZECHOSLOVAK
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
State frontier
County border

The following titles have already appeared in this series:

Education in a socialist country
Socialist economy—aim and strategy
Women under socialism
Youth—at work, at leisure and in politics
Christians and churches in the GDR
How do we protect our environment?
Fun—health—fitness
How farmers live and work in the GDR
Science and society
Work in a nationally-owned factory
What is done to protect people's health?
Continued peace is vital—what is to be done?
Law and justice in the GDR
Freedom, democracy, human rights—for whom and for what?
Policies which put people first
Political detente and the arms race
Culture and art in socialist society
Socialist economic integration
Vocational training for today and tomorrow
Life in economic security